CalACT is going to San Francisco!

Meet us in San Francisco for the Spring Conference & EXPO April 20-23, 2010

CalACT is hosting the 2010 Spring Conference and EXPO at the Grand Hyatt Hotel located in Union Square in San Francisco. The Conference Committee and CalACT staff is busy preparing a great educational event with sessions designed to provide new ideas and information to transportation.

The annual CalACT Awards luncheon will be on Wednesday, April 21 followed by the EXPO. During the EXPO, you will have an opportunity to talk with vendors about their products. The evening event will feature a trolley car ride that will stop at many of San Francisco’s attractions and provide ample time to taste local cuisine.

CalACT would like attendees to utilize public transit to travel to the conference this year. Therefore, CalACT will present the “Pilgrim’s Progress” award to an attendee traveling the greatest distance to the conference by means of public transit and/or human powered vehicles. Previous winner, Charlie Anderson, traveled 329 miles by Amtrak, bus and bicycle to attend the 2000 CalACT Conference in Lake County. You can track your progress on a Pilgrim’s Progress Award Entry Form as you travel, or you may complete an entry form at the conference. Entry forms will be available on the CalACT website or at the conference registration table.

San Francisco is a very walk-able city, dotted with landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz and the largest Chinatown in the United States. A stroll of the City’s streets can lead from Union Square to North Beach to Fisherman’s Wharf, with intriguing neighborhoods to explore at every turn. Views of the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay are often laced with fog, creating a romantic mood in this European, yet American city. Therefore, we hope you will visit some of these sites during your free time or stay thru the weekend to unwind after the conference.

If you would like to submit an abstract to make a presentation at the conference please send it to Jacklyn@calact.org by November 15 to be considered by the committee. Early bird registration will begin November 15, 2009 for savings on registration rates and EXPO fees.
General Information

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In order to protect members’ privacy, CalACT’s membership list is available to members only. A hard copy (paper) list will be supplied to members at no charge. Printed mailing labels will be supplied for a fee of $30. The master mailing list will not be made available. Exceptions to this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Directors.

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For next publication date, please call 916.920.8018.

Calender of Events

Date               | Event                                                                                     |
--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
October 6           | Fatigue Management Workshop, San Diego. Details available on the CalACT website          |
October 7           | Fatigue Management Workshop, Sacramento. Details available on the CalACT website         |
October 27-29       | California Transit Association (CTA) Conference & EXPO, Pasadena. Details available on the CTA website: www.caltransit.org |
October 27           | Drug and Alcohol Training, No. Cal. Details will be available on the CalACT website soon.|
October 29           | Drug and Alcohol Training, So. Cal. Details will be available on the CalACT website soon.|
November 7           | Regional Roadeo at Morongo Basin Transit Authority, Joshua Tree, CA. Details available on the CalACT website. |
November 19          | Public Speaking – The ultimate Low Cost Marketing Tool Workshop, Los Angeles. Details available on the CalACT website soon. Class size limited to 10 people. |
March 22 -25        | Instructor’s Course in Bus Operator Training, La Jolla, CA, presented by the Transportation Safety Institute. Details available on the TSI website: www.tsi.dot.gov |
April 20 - 23       | CalACT Spring Conference & Expo, San Francisco, CA. Details will be available on the CalACT website soon. |
April 29            | Understanding ADA, Los Angeles, CA, presented by the National Transit Institute. Details available on the NTI website: www.ntionline.com |
July 26 - 29        | Instructor’s Course in Paratransit Operator Training, Orange, CA, presented by the Transportation Safety Institute. Details available on the TSI website: www.tsi.dot.gov |
Congratulations to the California Transit Association for their success in winning the lawsuit to protect transit funding. [cont.]

Another key component of the appellate court’s decision was its definition of “mass transportation purposes” specified by the initiatives. The court denied the state’s contention that the definition permitted the transfer of funds for home-to-school bus service, transport of disabled persons to regional centers funded by the Department of Developmental Services, repayment of Proposition 42 loans, payment of Proposition 116 bond debt service, and payment of the General Fund’s obligation to fund bond debt service for non-transit general obligation bonds. These are all programs historically supported only by General Fund revenues; thus, when the budget writers diverted transit dollars to these programs, they hoped to achieve General Fund “savings.”

“While we agree that these are all worthy programs, they simply don’t fit the public’s definition of mass transportation,” said Shaw. “We feel the voters intended ‘mass transportation’ to mean ‘public transportation’ or ‘public transit,’ and the appellate court agreed.”

By skirting the intention of the initiatives, budget crafters diverted more than $5 billion of transit funding this decade – nearly $3.5 billion in the last three budget cycles alone. Transit funding took an additional critical blow when the budget agreement enacted in February of this year eliminated the State Transit Assistance program.

But proponents of the legal action saw the suit as being about more than just money to keep transit moving. “Four times since 1990 – and with overwhelming approval – voters have clearly and repeatedly expressed their demands for dedicated transit funding,” Shaw noted, “and their will has been repeatedly circumvented by those responsible for crafting the state budget.”

“Furthermore, our original lawsuit strikes at the heart of the gimmicks that have been employed year after year in putting together the state budget,” he added. “We recognize the horrendous crunch that the budget crafters face, but the fact that the California Supreme Court would not even hear the state’s request for an appeal of the appellate court decision is one more obvious sign that the whole budget process needs serious reform.”

Chair’s Message

Chair, George Sparks

New Initiatives

When I think about the history of CalACT, I tend to use the new programs and innovative solutions that were started, nurtured and made a reality by CalACT as my benchmarks. The first of these milestones was founding an association focusing on the needs and concerns of small and medium operators, as well as providers of rural and specialized services in California. Among CalACT’s other achievements was the formation of an insurance pool for nonprofit providers which is now Non Profits United, and the implementation of Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP). I would like to highlight two new initiatives from CalACT that I hope will become milestones as well.

Vehicle Procurement Partnership

Vehicle procurement is a difficult issue for many nonprofit and smaller public operators. Most depend on the State of California contract to secure vehicles that meet funding source standards. Some of our members have expressed a desire to have options beyond the State contract and CalACT has begun pursuing the possibility of cooperative vehicle procurement as a benefit for our membership. These efforts have taken on added importance in light of the fact that there is no State vehicle contract in place and many members need to move ahead with vehicle purchases.

CalACT is exploring the use of contracts that would provide operators with greater flexibility in determining the vehicle that best meets their needs. This “menu style” approach has been used in other states and shows great promise.

Spearheading our initiative is Joe Meer, General Manager of Morongo Basin Transit Authority. Joe has moved ahead rapidly to make the first CalACT cooperative vehicle procurement a reality. We plan to provide purchase options for Type I, II, and III vehicles at a minimum. In the meantime, CalACT staff is compiling a list of FTA compliant contracts for “piggybacking.” If you are interested in participating or want more information, contact Jacklyn Montgomery at CalACT or Joe Meer at (760) 366-2986.

Health Insurance

CalACT is working with Access Services, Inc. along with other member agencies on developing a program to allow CalACT member agencies to purchase affordable medical insurance as a benefit to their employees. This issue is timely not only in light of the debates going on in Congress, but because securing affordable, dependable coverage represents a constant challenge for many small operators. Arun Prem of Access Services and a CalACT board member have taken the lead on this issue and are working with CalACT on a proposal. Expect to hear more on this program in the near future. Contact Jacklyn at CalACT or Arun at (213) 270-6000.
Saving Fuel and the Environment

By Marc Ellison

Coffax – If you could reduce your fuel costs by $300/yr per cut-away bus and reduce harmful CO2 emissions at the same time, would you do it? Excessive idling is eating into your budget every day of every week...but there is something you can do about it and Paratransit, Inc. is an organization taking advantage of the new technology. They are running the Eco-Star, an anti-idling system on a test group of 6 buses and reaping the benefits.

The facts tell the story...It is more fuel efficient to turn a warm engine off, and then restart it, than it is to let the engine idle for more than 5 seconds (remember that the next time you sit in the fast food drive thru lane). What does this mean in terms of fuel consumption? According to Altoona test results, idling consumes approximately 0.61 gallons of fuel per hour of idle time on a typical V8 gas engine. Now look at your own fleet’s operation to determine what these facts mean to your bottom line. How many times does your average bus idle in Park for more than 5 seconds each day (e.g. loading and unloading passengers)? How much time do those 5+ second stops add up to per day? Per year? Now multiply that number by the number of cut-away buses in your fleet and you will see how much fuel (and therefore money) you are idling away. The answer may astound you.

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Earlier this year, Paratransit, Inc. volunteered to participate in a test by having 6 buses equipped with Eco-Star. Using the data collected starting in May, the results could be calculated. Average idle time reduction for the 6 buses is 18.4%. When the May, June, and July numbers were annualized, the yearly estimates are as follows...Gallons of fuel saved in a year = 98.5 gal / bus; Average idling hours eliminated in a year = 161 hrs / bus; and CO2 eliminated in a year = 1,871 lbs. What makes the data more impressive is that the test is being run during the summer months when the system is less active. Eco-Star will not turn off the engine when the A/C is on (for passenger comfort). The biggest savings for buses in California are likely to happen in the spring and fall when ambient temperatures are more moderate. In fact, earlier spring testing revealed idle time reduction from a low of 24% to a high of 54%.

Eco-Star automatically turns off the engine but not battery power. By leaving the ignition on, the electrical load of the vehicle is fully operational – allowing for usage of the lift, lights, radio, etc... When the driver presses the service brake Eco-Star automatically restarts the engine – all without the driver ever touching the key. If any of the “engine off” conditions are no longer valid after Eco-Star has turned off the engine, then Eco-Star automatically restarts the engine without driver intervention. Because it is a passive system for the driver, management no longer needs to hound their drivers to stop idling unnecessarily. It’s all automatic, repeatable and reliable.

By Jeff Wagner

In a resounding victory for those who provide and those who depend on public transit in California, the State Supreme Court late yesterday rejected the Schwarzenegger Administration’s appeal of a lower court ruling that annual raids on transit funding are illegal.

By declining to accept the Petition for Review filed by state officials, the high court upheld the ruling of the Third District Court of Appeal that recent funding diversions violated a series of statutory and constitutional amendments enacted by voters via four statewide initiatives dating back to 1990.

“By denying the state’s appeal, the Supreme Court has affirmed once and for all what we always maintained was true: that it’s illegal to shift dedicated state transit funds away from transit agencies and their riders,” said Joshua Shaw, Executive Director of the California Transit Association and lead plaintiff in the case. “This decision validates our position that this practice has been illegal since even before 2007, and that the definition of mass transportation adopted by lawmakers since then to mask these diversions is illegal.”

Public transit officials now hope to work with the Administration and Legislature to restore those funds taken since the Association filed the initial lawsuit in October, 2007, on the heels of the 2007-08 state budget package that raised $1.19 billion from the Public Transportation Account (PTA). Since that agreement, more than $3 billion in transit funding has been re-routed to fill holes in the General Fund.

“This is a clear victory for the millions of Californians who depend every day on public transit to get to work, go to school and access vital health care facilities,” said Michael Burns, General Manager of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and Chair of the Association’s Executive Committee. “Public transit has certainly borne more than its fair share of the budget burden in recent years, and we see the effects of that throughout the state in the form of fare increases, transit service reductions, job layoffs and more. We’re very hopeful that the high court’s decision will now enable us to work with lawmakers to restore these funds and help us to meet the ever-increasing demands for transit services in California.”

In its original lawsuit, the Association maintained that several successful ballot measures – from 1990’s Proposition 116 through Proposition 1A of 2006 – established the PTA as a trust fund and require that PTA revenues must be spent on “mass transportation purposes.”

The initial Superior Court decision, issued in January of 2008, ruled that the 2007-08 budget violated the law by diverting $409 million from the PTA to reimburse the General Fund for past debt service payments on Proposition 108 bonds. The ruling declared that the shift “does not serve any transportation planning or mass transportation purpose.” At the same time, however, the Court permitted an additional $779 million transfer from the PTA to cover home-school busing and other programs that public transit advocates argued did not meet the definition of “mass transportation” as expressed in Proposition 116, which voters approved with the intent of establishing the PTA as a trust fund to support true public transportation service.

Just two weeks after the Superior Court ruling, the Legislature re-instated the $409 million worth of cuts by reconfiguring the law on which the court’s decision was based, meaning that the entire $1.19 billion rightfully intended for public transportation funding had been raided. The Association filed its appeal of the Superior Court decision last September.

On June 30 of this year, the appellate court dismissed the State’s claims that it is legal to divert PTA revenues before they are deposited in the PTA, and also that it is within the purview of the Legislature to transfer “spillover” funds from the PTA to the Mass Transit Transportation Fund (MTF). The MTF was created in 2007 by budget writers as a mechanism to perpetrate the diversion of transit funding to non-transit purposes,” Shaw explained. “By shifting PTA money into the ‘Mass Transportation Fund,’ they sought to create a veneer of legitimacy for these diversions. The appellate court rejected this legerejiman.”
Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program [cont.]

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Wheelchair with tether straps installed.

If tie-downs cannot be properly attached to the mobility device, tether straps can be used. It’s important to test the various types and models of tie-downs customers may encounter, because small variations in hook/buckle shapes or sizes can affect attachment capabilities.

Wheelchair with tether straps installed

A digital camera can be used to take photos of the final installation for filing. Standardized forms should be developed for recording all pertinent information. Other useful items are scissors, cleaning supplies for preparing marking locations, a kneeling pad or cushion (installation can require getting down on the floor!), a tape measure for checking securement dimensions, and small hand tools for working tethers into tight spaces.

Training and Education

Training is vitally important for any staff members who will perform installation of markings or tether straps. Staff selected should have familiarity with vehicle operations and accessibility, and have should have good customer service skills. Staff should be assigned to this task on an ongoing basis, since the “experience base” of working with the variety of mobility devices will build CUMULATIVELY. It is best to have the job done by a small number of people who can confer with each other, for consistency and identifying issues.

Training can be done with the same wheelchairs used for securement training for vehicle operators (as long as at least three or four of the basic types are included). Even better is a visit to a local wheelchair dealer for practicing with the wide variety of wheelchair shapes and sizes available today. This approach also allows the dealer to explain wheelchair and scooter construction features, while at the same time themselves learning about the transit agency’s program and overall accessibility.

Education can be done via brochures, flyers, posters, press releases, website information, and vehicle postings. Promotional and educational materials can be targeted to various audiences, such as customers, vehicle operators and supervisors, and community agencies.

Saving Fuel and the Environment [cont.]

Continued from page 4

and we expect similar seasonal savings in the fall. At 54% idle time reduction, the fuel and CO2 savings really add up quickly. (Note: Different auto off criteria were used for buses to determine the most effective way to reduce idle time).

How does Paratransit, Inc. feel about running Eco-Star? Linda Deavens, CEO of Paratransit, Inc. may have been a bit skeptical when the pilot first started, but after the first set of numbers were reported, she became a believer. “The potential impact Eco-Star can have on our fuel costs and CO2 emissions is significant” Deavens reported. She also added that they “…are looking forward to seeing the full year results which will include the cooler temperatures in the fall and greater idle reduction levels.” The drivers who interact with Eco-Star everyday feel just as optimistic about the product and results. Marc Harvey, a bus driver for Paratransit Inc., commented that the use of Eco-Star is “…easily incorporated into his routine [and] makes a good conversation piece with passengers.” Dan Heidelburg, another driver said it has been a “good experience…[and] would add it to the whole fleet.”

Given the economic times and the push for green technology, all companies are looking for ways to save money and help the environment. Eco-Star is a proactive, automatic solution to do both. El Dorado National and ARBOC are two of the bus manufacturers who have installed Eco-Star on buses for customers and are prepared to help you reach your fuel economy goals. To learn more, contact InterMotive Vehicle Controls at 800-969-6080.

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Please contact Creative Bus Sales at 800.326.2877 for more information. We will be contacting all California transportation agencies with more information in the coming weeks.

SAVE THE DATE: To follow up on last year’s Italian Feast, Creative Bus Sales will be hosting another extravagant cocktail party Tuesday night following the opening reception at the CTA convention in Pasadena on October 27th. Full details to be announced shortly, please visit us at Expo booth 218 and booth 5-6.

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**Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program [cont.]**

**Continued from page 21**

*Program Materials and Resources*

**Marking and tether strap choices**

The first choices to be made are for the style, sizes, and colors of markings and straps to be used. Marking can be done with color-coded tape, stickers, plastic wire ties, or paint. Considerations include ease of installation and removal, acceptance by customers, and durability.

Two colors of markings can be used, the first being for the basic marking that is coordinated with the color of tether straps. The second marking color can be used for placing underneath where “permanent” type tether straps are installed. This enables tether to be re-installed properly when removed for cleaning or replacement, and so that locations marked thusly are not confused with the basic markings for “where to attach tie-downs”.

Tether straps are marketed by most of the major vehicle security equipment manufacturers. They are sold with names such as “webbing loop”, “secure loop”, and “quick strap”. The straps are also sometimes called “Stokes Straps”, after Bill Stokes, a disability advocate and consultant who helped popularize the concept “permanently”. The straps sold by tie-down manufacturers are tested to appropriate standards. Using straps that are not tested could create additional liability.

Colors can be chosen to promote visibility, and lighter/brighter colors can make them easier to see and use. The straps sold by tie-down manufacturers are tested to appropriate standards. Using straps that are not tested could create additional liability.

**Variety of tether strap styles, lengths, and colors**

Older power wheelchair marks only (yellow tape)

**Other tools and aids**

In addition to a supply of marking materials and tether straps, installers should have examples of each of the major types of tie-downs used in local fleets (at least for the smallest, “most restrictive” example). These are used to determine if the mobility device can accept tie-downs. If they can, markings can be applied. This includes marking any WC19-style attachment loops that may be built into the wheelchair. The reason for this is so markings are consistent on all wheelchairs, and so they’re easily visible (WC19-compliant labeling is often small, and not visible from various angles in actual on-board environments).

**Caltrans Reaches Out to Stakeholders**

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Mass Transportation (DMT) has been busy recently. When the Caltrans-administered Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program received $32.2 million in Recovery Act funds for Federal Fiscal Year 2009, DMT went right to work.

In July and August, a team of four DMT staff, including the Federal Grants Office Chief and Branch Chiefs traveled across the state to conduct Recovery Act Workshops at ten of the twelve Caltrans District Offices, they instructed local agency partners on use of the Recovery Act funds.

To ensure that all those who needed to get the message were involved, CalACT worked in coordination with DMT, to organize the workshops, including outreach, online registration and a working lunch at each event. Each workshop included a program overview, and a discussion of the issues and procedures related to implementation, reporting, reimbursement, monitoring, civil rights requirements, and procurement processes. Copies of the presentations were made available at DMT’s website at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/MassTrans/ARRA-new.html and teleconferencing was available for those who could not attend the workshops in person.

While the main focus of each workshop was ARRA, DMT looked at the assembled audiences as opportunities to also discuss the Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account (PTMISEA) (Prop. 1B) Program, a timely discussion since long-awaited program funding was released during the workshops.

More than 230 individuals, representing 150+ organizations involved in providing transportation services, attended the workshops. Participants included transit agencies and operators, councils of government, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Caltrans District Transit Representatives, and other interested parties. There was much dialogue and interaction with the participants. Comment cards were distributed as a way to obtain feedback, questions, or requests. Workshop comments proved to be overwhelmingly positive.
The California Transit Association invites you to attend its 44th Annual Fall Conference & EXPO at the Pasadena Convention Center in beautiful Pasadena, California. Co-hosted by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Pasadena Area Rapid Transit System, this premier event brings together more than 300 leaders and decision-makers from California’s public transportation systems and offers an array of educational sessions and networking opportunities.

Arthur T. Leahy, CEO, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, states, “This year’s theme – Transit Revival/Transit Survival – is particularly relevant, given our nation’s renewed interest in mass transit, fueled by economic challenges and complicated by our industry’s limited resources.”

During the Small Operator Awards Luncheon, Leslie Rogers, Regional Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, will provide a status update on economic recovery funding and the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. Kimberly Gayle, Office Chief, Caltrans State & Federal Grants (DMT), will give an update from Caltrans, including ARRA. FTA Deputy Administrator Therese McMillan will also give remarks at the Opening General Session on “Where Federal Transit is Headed — and How California Can Respond.”

The plenary session scheduled for the morning of Wednesday, October 28 will provide a comprehensive update and analysis of the many strategies transit advocates are pursuing in the fight to protect state funding for public transit. The session will feature blue ribbon panelists that bring knowledge of transportation, social, legal, and economic issues. Discussion will explore the status and implications of the California Transit Association’s litigation efforts, discuss the process of defining and launching a possible statewide ballot initiative to protect transit funding, provide local and regional examples of successful electoral initiative efforts, and consider the role of the Association and its members in any State Constitution reform effort to fix the broken State budget process. This promises to be an informative and engaging look at the challenges confronting transit providers and advocates, and what lies ahead in the face of California’s transit funding crisis.

Plenary session speakers include Joshua W. Shaw, Executive Director of the California Transit Association; Dr. Richard Bernard, Senior Vice President of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin and Associates, one of the premier political public opinion research firms in the nation; Richard A. Marcantonio, Managing Attorney for Public Advocates, Inc.; Russell Hancock, President & Chief Executive Officer for Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Advocates, Inc.; and Dr. Richard Bernard, Senior Vice President of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin and Associates, one of the premier political public opinion research firms in the nation.

Whichever approach is selected, it’s important for legal and risk management staff to understand the program and give their blessing prior to implementation. Key to discussing the overall liability the agency will have with the program, as compared to without it.

The purpose of such a program is to reduce the number of incidents and accidents that may occur with unsecured or under-secured mobility devices. The purpose of such a program is to reduce the number of incidents and accidents that may occur with unsecured or under-secured mobility devices. Tippers and other hazardous movement by wheelchairs (especially scooters, either 3- or 4-wheeled) during normal operations are the most common type of incident. Tether straps can also reduce injuries to vehicle operators by minimizing the physical difficulty of attaching tie-downs.

The benefit of preventing catastrophic accidents almost always outweighs perceived liability created by the application of markings or tether straps (CAVEAT: as long as installation is done CORRECTLY.) The fact that tie-down manufacturers offer tether straps as aids in using their products is one argument in favor of adopting a strong program. Another important issue is coordination with adjacent agencies (or professionals) serving customers who use their products is one argument in favor of adopting a strong program. Another argument is very successful implementation in various locations throughout the country. Agencies contemplating their own program can easily learn from others that have already done it.

Taking the liability aspect to its logical conclusion, the implementing agency should maintain as much control and oversight as possible. Installation of markings and straps should be done by qualified staff who understand both wheelchairs and how tie-downs work (in “real world” vehicles, not just the classroom). Also key are establishing consistent training and procedures, documentation of what is installed, and communication of rules and responsibilities to customers.
Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program [cont.]

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WHEELCHAIR MARKING AND TETHER STRAPS

The first component is “markings” for appropriate attachment points on customers’ chairs — with color-coded tape, stickers, wire ties, or some other identifier. If there is no good place for attaching tie-down belts or hooks, a fabric webbing “tether strap” can be installed on the mobility device. The following steps can be useful in developing a comprehensive approach:

Program Components and Responsibilities

The first task is to define objectives and get buy-in from staff and customers, especially wheelchair users and disability advisory or advocacy groups. Having everyone understand the reasons for the program will help keep it on track. Local consumers can help pilot the program and evaluate choices that must be made.

A consideration is whether to offer the program free of charge, or to require a fee. Systems that offer it at no charge have found that customers are more eager to participate, and that the cost is minimal compared to the many benefits (customer comfort, speedier boarding, operating personnel safety and convenience, and minimization of accidents).

Venues for installing markings and straps

A key decision is where, and by whom, markings and straps will be installed. The best choice is usually to offer markings and tether straps as a “permanent”, one-time installation by trained staff in an unhurried environment. This approach can be called the “centralized” method, and allows time for evaluating the best tie-down attachment points. It also allows for determining whether markings, straps, or both, are needed on individual mobility devices. It is helped by “trying on” the actual tie-down equipment used in transit and paratransit fleets. In some cases, markings may be needed on one end of the wheelchair, and straps on the other end.

The centralized method also enhances working with customers to identify any problems with their mobility device being accommodated on vehicles. It also gives a chance to identify any issues that may need to be addressed by qualified mobility device technicians before markings or straps can be safely installed. Another benefit is the ability to record and document what is installed, and to interact with customers regarding their general riding experiences.

Offering convenient locations for customers to visit for installations is important. Some customers can’t or won’t travel far to participate. Transit agencies may offer the program via appointments throughout the community, at either their offices or at transit centers, as well as at public facilities like community centers or disability service organizations. In some cases, a local disability-oriented organization may wish to actually perform installations, either as a public service, or as a contractor to the transit system. However, liability concerns can deter agencies or firms other than the transit system from wanting to be responsible.

Alternatives to the centralized model are: a) installation by customers themselves, or b) by vehicle operators. Some transit agencies distribute marking media and/or tether straps to customers for self-installation. Others provide straps as equipment for vehicle operators to carry. While these approaches may require less staff and facility commitment, they tend to not allow for as much control and documentation, and can place more responsibility on consumers, who may not be familiar enough with vehicle tie-down equipment.

The “onboard” method typically uses only tether straps, on an as-needed basis. It precludes the “pre-marking” approach, which is often preferable to using tether straps, since direct attachment of tie-downs is always best. It is because adding to the effective securement length of wheelchairs and introducing more flexibility when it’s not necessary can result in less than desirable tie-down mechanics, and excess movement.

Attempting to use tether straps at the time of each passenger’s trip can also be time-consuming and physically challenging for drivers, depending on the mobility device. On-board deployment may be more feasible in smaller systems, where customers and their mobility devices are well known to vehicle operators. It is also sometimes used as a back-up, where a centralized program is the primary mode.

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California Transit Association 44th Annual Fall Conference & EXPO • October 27-29, 2009 [cont.]

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Network; and Denny Zane, Executive Director of Move L.A.

Mayor Pat McCrory of Charlotte, North Carolina, a leading advocate for a comprehensive transportation and land-use plan, will deliver the keynote address entitled, “From Mayberry to Metropolis: The Process to Create the Best of Both Worlds in Land-Use and Transit”, the presentation will take attendees through the process of political and pragmatic decision-making to develop a land-use and transit plan to meet the future mobility, economic development and quality-of-life needs of a city and/or region.

In addition, the conference offers 24 concurrent sessions designed to appeal to a broad cross-section of providers — from large, urban multi-modal agencies to small, rural operations. Education sessions are organized into six different “routes”: Fiscal/Planning & Policy, Marketing, Management/Leadership, Maintenance, Operations, and Human Resources. A balance of small, medium, and large operators, as well as transportation industry consultants, will be speaking on the various panels. Titles and descriptions of all of the sessions can be found in the conference brochure at www.caltransit.org.

The two recipients of the Small Operator Awards will be announced at a special luncheon on Tuesday, October 27. Individuals and agencies are nominated for two prestigious awards — the Transit Leadership Award, given to an outstanding individual who has provided strong leadership and vision to a Small Operator, and the Transit Excellence Award, given to an outstanding Small Operator innovation, program or service which demonstrates innovative concepts, effective problem-solving techniques or promotes a positive image of transit in the community. This event is open to all conference attendees and will include a Federal Transit Administration Update from Leslie Rogers, Federal Transit Administration’s Deputy Director of Small Disadvantaged Business Development, and a CalTrans Update from Kimberly Gayle, Office Chief, Federal Transit Grants.

Key networking opportunities are provided throughout the conference at the Opening Reception, EXPO, and Reception at the Pasadena Museum of California Art (PMCA). Attendees will have several opportunities to talk to representatives from a variety of companies and see the latest products and innovations at one of the largest trade shows in the transportation industry. Not to be missed is Wednesday evening’s reception at the PMCA, which will feature two exhibitions — Wayne Thiebaud: 70 Years of Painting and Behold the Day: The Color Block Prints of Frances Gearheart. Attendees will also enjoy live music, delicious food and libations under the stars at the museum’s rooftop terrace.

Register today at www.caltransit.org and receive the early registration rate by October 9. For questions regarding the program, please contact Amy Lai at 916.446.4656, ext. 1017 or amy@caltransit.org. For registration questions, please contact Tuyen Truong at 916.446.4656, ext. 1004 or tuyen@caltransit.org. ■

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Offices in California and Colorado
The Benefits of Sensitivity Training

By Jeanne Klingenberger

Paratransit by design is meant for persons who cannot use fixed route because of a variety of disabilities. The special modifications of the vehicles are intended to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided nondiscriminatory, accessible transportation services.

What does this mean for the Paratransit provider? It means that any person using Paratransit is to be provided with special services that are comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed-route system.

Should a vehicle operator discern whether or not a disability is present? It is important during transportation training sessions to impress upon vehicle operators that he or she shall never make personal judgments or ride-sharing determinations about any passenger at any time. They shall never ask the passenger anything about his or her health condition. This does not mean that any person using Paratransit is to be aware of the need for assistance; it is to be ignored. Safety for the passenger is of utmost importance.

Mobility devices such as canes, walkers, and wheelchairs provide visual cues that an individual may have a need for Paratransit service. This is not the case with hidden diseases. Hidden diseases range from short term conditions to chronic or even fatal conditions. Almost everyone experiences a condition that may be unknown to others by the time he reaches his elder years. Typical types of hidden degenerative diseases include heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and arthritis. Hidden diseases may also include cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer’s type dementia, traumatic brain injury, or stroke to name a few. The list goes on. One undeniable fact is that all human beings are vulnerable to injury, disease, and the effects of aging.

Paratransit staff that health conditions are confidential. Drivers must know that he should not hold discussions about his passengers with other passengers, his friends, his family members, or anyone else. In situations where behaviors are difficult to manage, reporting occurrences to their transit supervisor is the preferred method. The supervisor will determine the next action to follow.

Keep in mind that most care agencies have someone who provides instructions on how to best manage difficult behaviors while in transit. It is important to remember to deal with the situation, not the diagnosis. Knowing how to prevent circumstances from escalating will provide for safety of the passengers and the operator. Offering passengers validation and reassurance can go a long way in keeping the environment safe and secure.

By giving the drivers the proper education about why certain behaviors occur, and the skills on how to manage them, they themselves will remain calmer and convey confidence and kindness towards the consumer. As a result, buses will experience fewer trip disruptions, and customer satisfaction will increase.

Care Connexxus Adult Day Services, in Riverside, would like examples of drivers’ situations that were handled exceptionally well, demonstrating sensitivity for persons with hidden diseases. In developing its New Freedom Sensitivity Training Program for local transit providers, CCI would benefit from proven techniques that transit operators utilized during challenging situations. Please share your knowledge by emailing Jeanne Klingenberger at jklingenberger@careconnexxus.com.

Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program [cont.]

Continued from page 18

use of tether straps should be considered a “stoppage” measure, until users are able to obtain wheelchairs and scooters with integral (or manufacturer-attached) tie-down points.

Standard No. WC19: “Wheelchairs Used as Seats in Motor Vehicles“ was approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) in 2000, as a voluntary U.S. national standard. It specifies strength and geometric requirements for at least 4 securement points and seat/shoulder belt anchorage points that can withstand crash forces, as well as accessible geometry that can receive a securement hook or buckle. A brochure describing the standard and securement principles, entitled “RideSafe”, is available at www.travelsafer.org.

Acceptance of WC19 in the marketplace has been slow, due to the voluntary nature of the standard, the cost of development and testing (crashworthiness is an important factor), and lack of awareness and therefore demand from consumers. Another issue is the lack of awareness and acceptance by health care prescribers and funders. An example is the Medicare funding limitation for wheelchairs as “primarily for in-home” use only. In general, the federal government has shied away from this issue, and meaningful regulation does not seem to be forthcoming anytime soon.

Standards for Vehicle Securement Equipment

In addition to the ADA vehicle specifications, since 1996 there has been a voluntary industry standard for vehicle-mounted securement systems: Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Recommended Practice J2249: Wheelchair Tie-down and Occupant Restraints (WTORS). It is planned for incorporation as Part 18 of ANSI/RESNA Volume 4: Wheelchairs and Transportation, which will locate it adjacent to the WC19 and related wheelchair standards.

SAE J2249 covers WTORS sold as after-market equipment, since WTORS are not covered by OEM safety requirements of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). A few of the sections apply to specific types of tie-downs, such as docking devices or four-point strap systems only, but most of it applies to systems that use all types of tie-down devices, as long as they are used with forward-facing wheelchairs. Note that it does NOT allow attachment to mobility devices WHEELS — therefore, compliant devices tend to be strap- and docking-types, not the older wheel clamp styles, which are technically still allowable under the ADA.

Modern power chair with WC19 attachment points

So far, only a limited number of wheelchair models are available with the securement “loops” specified by WC19, dubbed the “Transit Option” by some wheelchair manufacturers. A listing of wheelchair models that have been designed and tested to meet WC-19 is available at http://www.tercotws.org/WC19.html

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Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program

Doug Cross
Douglas J. Cross Transportation Consulting, Oakland, California
www.douglascross.com

A common problem for transit personnel is not being able to identify, or reach, where to attach tie-down straps on many wheelchairs and scooters. Newer wheelchair designs often do not have the type of frame joints that tie-down systems were originally designed for. Now there is a voluntary industry standard for specially designed attachment points, ANSI/RESNA “WC19”, but wheelchairs complying with it are not yet in wide usage.

Some transit systems and disability organizations offer wheelchair marking and/or tether strap programs as a “best effort” approach to providing as much safety and comfort as possible. The objective is to make securement of mobility devices faster, easier, and safer to perform; to provide as stable and safe a tie-down as possible, and to make the process more consistent and convenient for transit customers who use mobility devices.

Wheelchair with markings (rear) and tether straps (front)

ADA REQUIREMENTS FOR MOBILITY DEVICE SECUREMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires vehicles to be accessible to mobility device users, and for service to ensure that passengers can take advantage of those features. The following are selected provisions related to mobility device securement:


NOTE: The US Access Board is the agency responsible for these guidelines, as codified at 36 CFR Part 1192. Meanwhile, implementing regulations of the US DOT are shown at 49 CFR Part 36, with the vehicle guidelines as an appendix. The two documents are identical, except for minor editorial differences and the number prefix, after which the numbering systems are parallel. For example, Section 1192.23 in this document corresponds to 38.23 in the DOT regulation. The Access Board is also currently revising the guidelines, a draft of which will be released for public comment sometime around late 2009: http://www.access-board.gov/transport/

Service Accessibility:

• 49 CFR Sec. 37.165: Lift and securement use:
  • “Interpretive” Appendix D to Part 37 - Background as to purpose of the regulations, has force of law.
  • FTA “Questions and Answers” bulletin (FTA.gov/Civil Rights & Accessibility →Americans with Disabilities Act →ADA Technical Assistance →FTA Bulletins)

Note: ADA does NOT require specific performance, such as a minimum number of tie-down points. Nor does it specify a particular level of safety for wheelchair users. Rather, the guidelines are intended to make wheelchairs comparable to regular vehicle seats, which are solidly attached to the floor. The principle is stated as a “securement system to ensure that the wheelchair remains within the securement area.” (However, from beyond the civil rights perspective of ADA, there are many safety and liability issues to be concerned about.)

INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Standards for Transportable Wheelchairs

Programs such as wheelchair markings and tether straps are increasingly used by transit agencies to deal with difficult-to-secure wheelchairs. Recent improvements in tie-down products have also helped. However, markings and tether straps are not nearly as good as having proper tie-down points built in or attached to wheelchairs. The

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Record Ridership on El Dorado Transit System

Ridership climbed nine-percent (9%) from July 2008 through June 2009 as El Dorado County residents boarded El Dorado Transit buses.

El Dorado Transit provides local bus service; commuter service and Dial-A-Ride (a curb-to-curb reservation service). For the 12-month period from June 2008 through July 2009 system wide ridership increased nine-percent (9%) over the prior year. The commuter bus service carries passengers to the downtown Sacramento corridor and added 11,923 trips on these 12 routes that operate Monday through Friday. The Iron Point Connector ridership, providing a connection to Sacramento Regional Transit light rail in Folsom, jumped thirty-six percent (36%). Ridership on the local bus service in the communities of Cameron Park and Diamond Springs increased and the Dial-A-Ride ridership remained static.

“Clearly the increase to ridership is tied to higher retail gas prices during the summer and fall of 2008. Higher gas prices proved to be the motivation for people to try transit throughout California,” stated Mindy Jackson, Executive Director of El Dorado Transit. “More people rode public transit due to the increase in gas prices and many continued to ride transit even when the price of gas dropped; however, as with any transportation related enterprises, our fuel costs increased and park-and-ride lots were at capacity. Our region has also seen an increase in vanpools and carpools as people try alternative transportation options to reduce the cost of their commute.”

To off-set revenue losses, El Dorado Transit reduced services and raised passenger fares in July 2009. This is a national trend and El Dorado Transit, as well as all transit operations, will closely monitor ridership, retail sales tax revenue receipts and expenses to ensure that public transit operates within the approved budgets.

El Dorado County residents continue to seek ridesharing options. To locate other residents that travel to or near your worksite location - register for carpool matching at www.50Corridortma.org. Parking spaces are available at the Placerville Station (Mosquito & Hwy 50); El Dorado County Fairgrounds; Ponderosa park and ride lots; Durock Road; Camino Heights and Wal-Mart on Missouri Flat (look for park and ride spaces in lot near corner of Forni and Missouri Flat roads).

Bus schedules and rider information is available at www.eldordotransit.com or by calling (530) 642-5383.  ·
UCLA Extension Public Policy Program - Fall 2009 Courses

Fall 2009 Courses

Increasing Housing in the Midst of a Crisis: Roles and Responsibilities
Wednesday, September 30, 2009

NEW TOPIC!
Mainstreaming Natural Hazards and Crisis Communication into Community Planning
Wednesday, October 7, 2009

Planning Commissioners Training
Thursday, November 12, 2009

California Water Projects and Urban Water Supplies: Environmental Compliance Requirements and Practical Approaches
Thursday, December 10, 2009

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UCLA Extension Public Policy Program & the Osher Lifelong Institute at UCLA Presents
Planning for Age-Integrated Communities
Monday, November 2, 2009

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California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): A Place to Start
Thursdays, September 24 – December 10, 2009

This twelve week course applies towards credits in the Global Sustainability Certificate, Concentration in Environmental Law and Policy.

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You can enroll online at www.uclaextension.edu/ or by calling UCLA Extension Registration at (310) 825-9971.
Found Money: Making the Most of Safety & Security Funding [cont.]


Being a consultant, I can’t let this opportunity pass without pointing out that one use of security funding is to bring in technical assistance to help assess your system security, prepare a security and disaster preparedness plan, and plan and carry out staff training and disaster exercises. Emergency planning should not be simply delegated to outside resources, but such assistance can give you a jumpstart on being prepared when disaster hits your transit system.

Recap

Each of these possible projects will increase your system’s safety and security readiness as well as facilitate your daily operations. Having possible projects on the shelf – or “shovel ready” in the current vernacular – not only gives you the ability to quickly respond when funding opportunities arise, but also raises management’s awareness of these issues and begins to incorporate safety and security issues into the day-to-day planning, operation and administration of your transit system.

Roy Glauthier provides consulting assistance to communities and transit agencies with a special emphasis on emergency preparedness, ADA compliance, community-level policy, system management and operational issues. Direct operating experience in local fixed-route services, paratransit and special services for seniors and individuals with disabilities allows him to focus in on specific issues and provide practical alternatives and recommendations.

Roy can be contacted at rglauthier@aol.com.

San Joaquin RTD’s Driver Receives Safe Driver of the Year Award for the Pacific Region

On July 13, the National Safety Council honored Leroy Goo, San Joaquin Regional Transit District’s (RTD) highest-seniority bus driver, with the 2008 Safe Driver of the Year Award for the Pacific Region. The Pacific Region is a 13 state area that includes California.

Prior to the National honor, in March, the San Joaquin County Safety Council awarded Leroy Goo, San Joaquin Regional Transit District’s (RTD) highest-seniority bus driver, with the 2008 Safe Driver of the Year Award for the Pacific Region. The Pacific Region is a 13 state area that includes California.

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1. Leroy joined RTD in 1975, and has served hundreds of thousands of passengers safely, courteously, and efficiently. He provides leadership to his fellow operators in safety, customer service, teamwork, and reliability. Leroy’s outstanding commitment to safety has resulted in over 31 years without a preventable accident. Records show he has driven over 1 million miles without an accident or citation.

RTD is honored that the National Safety Council chose Leroy Goo for this recognition and is proud of him for this accomplishment.

Possible Safety & Security Projects

Based on these two tools and familiarity with a wide range of medium and small transit systems, here are eleven projects that you might consider if safety and security funding were to come your way:

1. Implement an ID Badge System for all employees, employers and contractors.

ID Badge systems introduce a basic level of access control to transit systems as well as demonstrating a level of professionalism to your passengers and the public. Modern ID badge systems can be encoded with electronic identification and access capabilities (see below) and can be used for basic timekeeping purposes.

For small systems, ID badges may seem like overkill – I mean, everyone knows everyone else, right? No, actually, they don’t. New employees, outside contractors and service workers, and consultants (like me) may not be immediately recognized and it shouldn’t be assumed that even long-time employees have access to every corner of the transit system.

2. Install Entry/Exit Control Systems.

Electronic entry and exit control systems can be operated by numeric entry pads or ID badge readers and can establish basic access control to transit facilities and secure areas within facilities, can be set up to allow general or limited employee access and to record who enters and exits monitored doors and when. In smaller systems, entry control systems could allow general public access to building foyers or waiting areas while electronically limiting public access to staff offices and non-public areas, thus freeing staff from being directly present at all times.

Chances are that money and time are both in short supply in your transit organization, so let’s not waste either one. If funds become available, it’s important to use them wisely in ways that will be broadly useful to the organization and won’t take a huge amount of management time and staff time to implement. Equally important is to identify possible projects through a process that will be immediately recognized and credible in the grant application review.

Two tools are easily available to guide your self-analysis of your system’s safety and security and thereby identify needed and useful improvement projects. The first of these tools is the “TSA/FTA Security and Emergency Management Action Items List for Transit Agencies” [available through the Safety and Security link on the FTA home page at http://www.fta.dot.gov/]. This action item list may look familiar – it’s the basis for the Security and Emergency Management questions in FTA’s Triennial Review.

Probably more useful is the FBI Terrorism Vulnerability Self-Assessment, which contains detailed questions regarding your local community, transit facilities, procedures and such which are designed to be used by local transit management and staff, perhaps with assistance, to identify where attention is needed in your own system. [See The Public Transportation System Security and Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide. Appendix B, at http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Publications/Security/PlanningGuide.pdf]
Continued from page 14

3. Install Security/Intrusion Monitoring Systems. Security systems come in increasing levels of sophistication from the basic entry pad system you might have at home to systems that monitor perimeter fencing, roof access doors and remote facilities. The location, design, staffing and operations within your facilities will help determine the requirements needed for your security system. Among important considerations are that intrusion can occur during hours when the facility is staffed, the possibility of false alarms caused by wildlife or natural events, the ability to verify security and reset systems remotely and whether your system facilities will help determine the requirements needed for your security system. Among important considerations are that intrusion can occur during hours when the facility is staffed, the possibility of false alarms caused by wildlife or natural events, the ability to verify security and reset systems remotely and whether your system will be actively monitored by an alarm or security firm or tied directly to local law enforcement.

4. Install CCTV Surveillance Systems. Closed-circuit television (CCTV) systems would be included in the higher-end security systems (above) but are increasingly reasonable for monitoring of remote locations such as fueling points, park-out locations and park-and-ride lots through use of inexpensive webcams. CCTV can be connected to looped recording devices that retain surveillance video for a prescribed time period, allowing for review and retention of recorded events if needed.

5. Provide a hot line or panic alarm to law enforcement.

Does your transit system have remote locations where

Continued on page 15

6. Install Public Address/Intercom systems.

Quick response to security or emergency events requires the ability to communicate with staff, transit passengers and the general public in and around transit facilities. Public address and intercom systems can be set up for general or zonal coverage, connected remotely to a central location and can incorporate remote microphones to enable two-way communications.

7. Establish crisis response communications within transit system and to local emergency responders.

Your transit system is usually one of the largest communications systems in your community that is not controlled by law enforcement or fire agencies. As such, your transit system may be called on to provide communications in an emergency situation in addition to fulfilling its role in providing transportation services. To meet that communications role your transit agency will need some capability to communicate directly with law enforcement and other responder agencies. Additionally, should a security event compromise the general transit radio communications system, a separate, perhaps limited communications system would be needed to coordinate internal crisis response.

8. Control vehicle access to transit facilities.

Entry to transit facilities by non-transit vehicles needs to be controlled so as to prevent unauthorized vehicles from mixing with transit vehicles, delivery of packages other than to designated receiving areas, and entry at all during periods when the facility is closed or operating with limited staff. Such entry controls can be implemented through design and construction of roadways, access gates and barriers that effect the separation of facility traffic. While design and reconstruction may be needed to effect smooth segregation of transit, delivery, and private auto traffic, interim steps can include installation of card and remotely operated entry gates, use of signage and installation of fencing and temporary barriers.

9. Establish back-up electrical power systems for essential operations.

There are a variety of major and minor events that could disrupt the flow of electrical power to your transit facility. While most outages may be of limited duration, extended disruption can disrupt or disable computer and communications systems, on-site fueling, maintenance operations, security and intrusion systems, entry control systems and such. Auto-start electrical generator systems can be installed to maintain power to essential computer, communications and other systems so that control and basic security are maintained and transit operations may continue to the extent possible given the situation.

10. Implement computer and data protection systems.

Two simple and relatively low-cost actions can increase the safety of your agency’s computer systems and the data they hold. First, install back-up/uninterruptible power supplies [UPS] on individual computers to prevent computer crashes and loss of data when power outages or momentary power fluctuations occur. Such UPS systems are essentially battery packs that allow a graceful shutdown of the computer rather than a data-losing crash.

The second important action is to establish off-site back-up of essential computer data through either off-site storage of back-up on physical media or through any of the many Internet-based data back-up and storage firms. The Internet-based firms have the advantage of automatically backing-up one’s computer system on a regular basis during non-business hours as well as eliminating the physical transport of media to the storage location.

Continued on page 16
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5. Provide a hot line or panic alarm to law enforcement.

Does your transit system have remote locations where staff may operate alone, handle and store significant amounts of cash, conduct 24-hour maintenance operations, or have your own fueling facilities? These are only a few of the possible reasons for providing a direct hot line or alarm connection between transit facilities and local law enforcement. Like a panic button on a transit bus, a panic alarm or hot line should have the ability to be initiated surreptitiously while protecting against accidental triggering.

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You’ve seen it before: transit funding can be on life-support and you’re squeezing your budget till it whispers when, out of the blue, comes an announcement or a phone call from someone at the state or your local planning agency with word that the Office of Homeland Security or some other agency has released funding for transit safety and security purposes and that you’re a shoo-in for a grant. The only catch is that applications are due like tomorrow. Do you drop everything and brainstorm possible projects that will meet the program requirements – as well as the “smell test” when the local newspaper catches wind of the project?

The fact is that even the smallest transit system can be ready to make effective use of safety and security funding on the shortest of notices with a little bit of advance planning and analysis of your system needs, facilities, and services.

Identifying Your System’s Needs

Chances are that money and time are both in short supply in your transit organization, so let’s not waste either one. If funds become available, it’s important to use them wisely in ways that will be broadly useful to the organization and won’t take a huge amount of management and staff time to implement. Equally important is to identify possible projects through a process that will be immediately recognized and credible in the grant application review.

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Electronic entry and exit control systems can be operated by numeric entry pads or ID badge readers and can establish basic access control to transit facilities and secure areas within facilities, can be set up to allow general or limited employee access and to record who enters and exits monitored doors and when. In smaller systems, entry control systems could allow general public access to building foyers or waiting areas while electronically limiting public access to staff offices and non-public areas, thus freeing staff from being directly present at all times.

Recap

Each of these possible projects will increase your system’s safety and security readiness as well as facilitate your daily operations. Having possible projects on the shelf – or “shovel ready” in the current vernacular – not only gives you the ability to quickly respond when funding opportunities arise, but also raises management’s awareness of these issues and begins to incorporate safety and security issues into the day-to-day planning, operation and administration of your transit system.

Roy Glauthier provides consulting assistance to communities and transit agencies with a special emphasis on emergency preparedness, ADA compliance, community-level policy, system management and operational issues. Direct operating experience in local fixed-route services, paratransit and special services for seniors and individuals with disabilities allows him to focus in on specific issues and provide practical alternatives and recommendations.

Roy can be contacted at rglauthier@aol.com.

San Joaquin RTD’s Driver Receives Safe Driver of the Year Award for the Pacific Region

On July 13, the National Safety Council honored Leroy Goo, San Joaquin Regional Transit District’s (RTD) highest-seniority bus driver, with the 2008 Safe Driver of the Year Award for the Pacific Region. The Pacific Region is a 13 state area that includes California.

Prior to the National honor, in March, the San Joaquin County Safety Council honored Leroy Goo, San Joaquin Regional Transit District’s (RTD) highest-seniority bus driver, with the 2008 Safe Driver of the Year Award for the Pacific Region. The Pacific Region is a 13 state area that includes California.

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Leroy joined RTD in 1975, and has served hundreds of thousands of passengers safely, courteously, and efficiently. He provides leadership to his fellow operators in safety, customer service, teamwork, and reliability. Leroy’s outstanding commitment to safety has resulted in over 31 years without a preventable accident. Records show he has driven over 1 million miles without an accident or citation.

RTD is honored that the National Safety Council chose Leroy Goo for this recognition and is proud of him for this accomplishment.

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Fall 2009 Courses

Increasing Housing in the Midst of a Crisis: Roles and Responsibilities
Wednesday, September 30, 2009

NEW TOPIC!
Mainstreaming Natural Hazards and Crisis Communication into Community Planning
Wednesday, October 7, 2009

Planning Commissioners Training
Thursday, November 12, 2009

California Water Projects and Urban Water Supplies: Environmental Compliance Requirements and Practical Approaches
Thursday, December 10, 2009

Special Programs

UCLA Extension Public Policy Program & the Osher Lifelong Institute at UCLA Presents
Planning for Age-Integrated Communities
Monday, November 2, 2009

This special event will explore the nature of today’s inter-generational relationships in regards to housing and transportation decisions.

A New Quarter-Long Course!
California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA): A Place to Start
Thursdays, September 24 – December 10, 2009

This twelve week course applies towards credits in the Global Sustainability Certificate, Concentration in Environmental Law and Policy.

For more information, please call (310) 825-7885 or visit our website at www.uclaextension.edu/publicpolicy.

You can enroll online at www.uclaextension.edu/ or by calling UCLA Extension Registration at (310) 825-9971.
Record Ridership on El Dorado Transit System

Ridership climbed nine-percent (9%) from July 2008 through June 2009 as El Dorado County residents boarded El Dorado Transit buses.

El Dorado Transit provides local bus service; commuter service and Dial-A-Ride (a curb-to-curb reservation service). For the 12-month period from June 2008 through July 2009 system wide ridership increased nine-percent (9%) over the prior year. The commuter bus service carries passengers to the downtown Sacramento corridor and added 11,923 trips on these 12 routes that operate Monday through Friday. The Iron Point Connector ridership, providing a connection to Sacramento Regional Transit light rail in Folsom, jumped thirty-six percent (36%). Ridership on the local bus service in the communities of Cameron Park and Diamond Springs increased and the Dial-A-Ride ridership remained static.

“To clearly increase to ridership is tied to higher retail gas prices during the summer and fall of 2008. Higher gas prices proved to be the motivation for people to try transit throughout California,” stated Mindy Jackson, Executive Director of El Dorado Transit. “More people rode public transit due to the increase in gas prices and many continued to ride transit even when the price of gas dropped however; as with any transportation related enterprises, our fuel costs increased and park-and-ride lots were at capacity. Our region has also seen an increase in vanpools and carpools as people try alternative transportation options to reduce the cost of their commute.”

To off-set revenue losses, El Dorado Transit reduced services and raised passenger fares in July 2009. This is a national trend and El Dorado Transit, as well as all transit operations, will closely monitor ridership, retail sales tax revenue receipts and expenses to ensure that public transit operates within the approved budgets.

El Dorado County residents continue to seek ridesharing options. To locate other residents that travel to or near your worksite location - register for carpool matching at www.50Corridortma.org. Parking spaces are available at the Placerville Station (Mosquito & Hwy 50); El Dorado County Fairgrounds; Ponderosa park and ride lots; Durock Road; Camino Heights and Wal-Mart on Missouri Flat (look for park and ride spaces in lot near corner of Forni and Missouri Flat roads).

Bus schedules and rider information is available at www.eldoradotransit.com or by calling (530) 642-5383.

Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program

Doug Cross
Douglas J. Cross Transportation Consulting,
Oakland, California
www.douglascross.com

A common problem for transit personnel is not being able to identify, or reach, where to attach tie-down straps on many wheelchairs and scooters. Newer wheelchair designs often do not have the type of frame joints that tie-down systems were originally designed for. Now there is a voluntarily industry standard for specially designed attachment points, ANSI/RESNA “WC19”, but wheelchairs complying with it are not yet in wide usage.

Some transit systems and disability organizations offer wheelchair marking and/or tether strap programs as a “best effort” approach to providing as much safety and comfort as possible. The objective is to make securement of mobility devices faster, easier, and safer to perform; to provide as stable and safe a tie-down as possible, and to make the process more consistent and convenient for transit customers who use mobility devices.

ADA REQUIREMENTS FOR MOBILITY DEVICE SECUREMENT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires vehicles to be accessible to mobility device users, and for service to ensure that passengers can take advantage of those features. The following are selected provisions related to mobility device securement:

Vehicle Accessibility: 49CFR PART 38:ADA Accessibility Specifications For Transportation Vehicles; Subpart B, Buses, Vans and Systems; Sec. 38.23 Mobility aid accessibility, (d) Securement devices.

NOTE: The US Access Board is the agency responsible for these guidelines, as codified at 36 CFR Part 1192. Meanwhile, implementing regulations of the US DOT are shown at 49 CFR Part 38, with the vehicle guidelines as an appendix. The two documents are identical, except for minor editorial differences and the number prefix, after which the numbering systems are parallel. For example, Section 1192.23 in this document corresponds to 38.23 in the DOT regulation. The Access Board is also currently revising the guidelines, a draft of which will be released for public comment sometime around late 2009: http://www.access-board.gov/transit/

Service Accessibility:

• 49 CFR Sec. 37.165: Lift and securement use:
  • Interpretive “Appendix D to Part 37 - Background as to purpose of the regulations, has force of law.
  • FTA “Questions and Answers” bulletin (FTA.gov/ Civil Rights & Accessibility →Americans with Disabilities Act →ADA Technical Assistance →FTA Bulletins)

Note: ADA does NOT require specific performance, such as a minimum number of tie-down points. Nor does it specify a particular level of safety for wheelchair users. Rather, the guidelines are intended to make wheelchairs comparable to regular vehicle seats, which are solidly attached to the floor. The principle is stated as a “securement system to ensure that the wheelchair remains within the securement area.” (However, from beyond the civil rights perspective of ADA, there are many safety and liability issues to be concerned about.)

INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Standards for Transportable Wheelchairs

Programs such as wheelchair markings and tether straps are increasingly used by transit agencies to deal with difficult-to-secure wheelchairs. Recent improvements in tie-down products have also helped. However, markings and tether straps are not nearly as good as having proper tie-down points built in or attached to wheelchairs.

Continued on page 19
The Benefits of Sensitivity Training

By Jeanne Klingenberger

Paratransit by design is meant for persons who cannot use fixed route because of a variety of disabilities. The special modifications of the vehicles are intended to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided nondiscriminatory, accessible transportation services.

What does this mean for the Paratransit provider? It means that any person using Paratransit is to be provided with special services that are comparable to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed-route system.

Should a vehicle operator discern whether or not a disability is present? It is important during transportation training sessions to impress upon vehicle operators that he or she shall never make personal judgments or ridership determinations about any passenger at any time. They shall never ask the passenger anything about their health condition. This does not mean that awareness of the need for assistance is to be ignored. Safety for the passenger is of utmost importance.

Mobility devices such as canes, walkers, and wheelchairs provide visual cues that an individual may have a need for Paratransit service. This is not the case with hidden diseases. Hidden diseases range from short term conditions to chronic or even fatal conditions. Almost everyone experiences a condition that may be unknown to others by the time he reaches his elder years. Typical types of hidden degenerative diseases include heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and arthritis. Hidden diseases may also include cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer’s type dementia, traumatic brain injury, or stroke to name a few. The list goes on. One undeniable fact is that all human beings are vulnerable to injury, disease, and the effects of aging.

Transit managers need to communicate to their staff that health conditions are confidential. Drivers commonly ask care providers about their participant’s diagnosis. Again, diagnoses are not to be shared. The participant has a right to privacy. Drivers must know that he should not hold discussions about his passengers with other passengers, his friends, his family members, or anyone else. In situations where behaviors are difficult to manage, reporting happenings to their transit supervisor is the preferred method. The supervisor will determine the next action to follow.

Keep in mind that most care agencies have someone who provides instructions on how to best manage difficult behaviors while in transit. It is important to remember to deal with the situation, not the diagnosis. Knowing how to prevent circumstances from escalating will provide for safety of the passengers and the operator. Offering passengers validation and reassurance can go a long way in keeping the environment safe and secure.

By giving the drivers the proper education about why certain behaviors occur, and the skills on how to manage them, they themselves will remain calmer and convey confidence and kindness towards the consumer. As a result, buses will experience fewer trip interruptions, and customer satisfaction will increase.

Care Connexxus Adult Day Services, in Riverside, would like examples of drivers’ situations that were handled exceptionally well, demonstrating sensitivity for persons with hidden diseases. In developing its New Freedom Sensitivity Training Program for local transit providers, CCI would benefit from proven techniques that transit operators utilized during challenging situations. Please share your knowledge by emailing Jeanne Klingenberger at jklingenberger@careconnexxus.com.

Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program [cont.]

Continued from page 18

use of tether straps should be considered a “stopgap” measure, until users are able to obtain wheelchairs and scooters with integral (or manufacturer-attached) tie-down points.

Standard No. WC19: “Wheelchairs Used as Seats in Motor Vehicles” was approved by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) in 2000, as a voluntary U.S. national standard. It specifies strength and geometric requirements for at least 4 securement points and seat/shoulder belt anchorage points that can withstand crash forces, as well as accessible geometry that can receive a securement hook or buckle. A brochure describing the standard and securement principles, entitled “RideSafe”, is available at www.travelsafer.org.

Acceptance of WC19 in the marketplace has been slow, due to the voluntary nature of the standard, the cost of development and testing (crashworthiness is an important factor), and lack of awareness and therefore demand from consumers. Another issue is the lack of awareness and acceptance by health care prescribers and funders. An example is the Medicare funding limitation for wheelchairs as “primarily for in-home” use only. In general, the federal government has shied away from this issue, and meaningful regulation does not seem to be forthcoming anytime soon.

Standards for Vehicle Securement Equipment

In addition to the ADA vehicle specifications, since 1996 there has been a voluntary industry standard for vehicle-mounted securement systems: Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) Recommended Practice J2249: Wheelchair Tie-down and Occupant Restraints (WTORS). It is planned for incorporation as Part 18 of ANSI/RESNA Volume 4: Wheelchairs and Transportation, which will locate it adjacent to the WC19 and related wheelchair standards.

SAE J2249 covers WTORS sold as after-market equipment, since WTORS are not covered by OEM safety requirements of the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS). A few of the sections apply to specific types of tie-downs, such as docking devices or four-point strap systems only, but most of it applies to systems that use all types of tie-down devices, as long as they are used with forward-facing wheelchairs. Note that it does NOT allow attachment to mobility devices WHEELS — therefore, compliant devices tend to be strap- and docking-types, not the older wheel clamp styles, which are technically still allowable under the ADA.
Continued from page 19

**WHEELCHAIR MARKING AND TETHER STRAPS**

The first component is “markings” for appropriate attachment points on customers’ chairs – with color-coded tape, stickers, wire ties, or some other identifier. If there is noogoing tie-down belts or hooks, a fabric webbing “tether strap” can be installed on the mobility device. The following steps can be useful in developing a comprehensive approach:

**Program Components and Responsibilities**

The first task is to define objectives and get buy-in from staff and customers, especially wheelchair users and disability advisory or advocacy groups. Having everyone understand the reasons for the program will help keep it on track. Local consumers can help pilot the program and evaluate choices that must be made.

A consideration is whether to offer the program free of charge, or to require a fee. Systems that offer it at no charge have found that customers are more eager to participate, and that the cost is minimal compared to the many benefits (customer comfort, speedier boarding, operating personnel safety and convenience, and minimization of accidents).

**Venues for installing markings and straps**

A key decision is where, and by whom, markings and straps will be installed. The best choice is usually to offer markings and tether straps as a “permanent”, one-time installation by trained staff in an unharried environment. This approach can be called the “centralized” method, and allows time for evaluating the best tie-down attachment points. It also allows for determining whether markings, straps, or both, are needed on individual mobility devices. It is helped by “trying on” the actual tie-down equipment used in transit and paratransit fleets. In some cases, markings may be needed on one end of the wheelchair, and straps on the other end.

The centralized method also enhances working with customers to identify any problems with their mobility device being accommodated on vehicles. It also gives a chance to identify any issues that may need to be addressed by qualified mobility device technicians before markings or straps can be safely installed. Another benefit is the ability to record and document what is installed, and to interact with customers regarding their general riding experiences.

Offering convenient locations for customers to visit for installations is important. Some customers can’t or won’t travel far to participate. Transit agencies may offer the program via appointments throughout the community, at either their offices or at transit centers, as well as at public facilities like community centers or disability service organizations. In some cases, a local disability-oriented organization may wish to actually perform installations, either as a public service, or as a contractor to the transit system. However, liability concerns can deter agencies or firms other than the transit system from wanting to be responsible.

Alternatives to the centralized model are: a) installation by customers themselves, or b) by vehicle operators. Some transit agencies distribute marking media and/or tether straps to customers for self-installation. Others provide straps as equipment for vehicle operators to carry. While these approaches may require less staff and facility commitment, they tend to not allow for as much control and documentation, and can place more responsibility on consumers, who may not be familiar enough with vehicle tie-down equipment.

The “onboard” method typically uses only tether straps, on an as-needed basis. It precludes the “pre-marking” approach, which is often preferable to using tether straps, since direct attachment of tie-downs is always best. This is because adding to the effective securement length of wheelchairs and introducing more flexibility when it’s not necessary can result in less than desirable tie-down mechanics, and excess movement.

Attempting to use tether straps at the time of each passenger’s trip can also be time-consuming and physically challenging for drivers, depending on the mobility device. On-board deployment may be more feasible in smaller systems, where customers and their mobility devices are well known to vehicle operators. It is also sometimes used as a back-up, where a centralized program is the primary mode.

Continued on page 21
The California Transit Association invites you to attend its 44th Annual Fall Conference & EXPO at the Pasadena Convention Center in beautiful Pasadena, California. Co-hosted by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and the Pasadena Area Rapid Transit System, this premier event brings together more than 300 leaders and decision-makers from California’s public transportation systems and offers an array of educational sessions and networking opportunities.

Arthur T. Leahy, CEO, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, states, “This year’s theme – Transit Revival/Transit Survival – is particularly relevant, given our nation’s renewed interest in mass transit, fueled by economic challenges and complicated by our industry’s limited resources.”

During the Small Operator Awards Luncheon, Leslie Rogers, Regional Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, will provide a status update on economic recovery funding and the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. Kimberly Gayle, Office Chief, Caltrans State & Federal Grants (DMT), will give an update from Caltrans, including ARRA. FTA Deputy Administrator Rogers, Regional Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, will give an update from California’s public transportation systems and offers an array of educational sessions and networking opportunities.

The plenary session scheduled for the morning of Wednesday, October 28 will provide a comprehensive update and analysis of the many strategies transit advocates are pursuing in the fight to protect state funding for public transit. The session will feature blue ribbon panelists that bring knowledge of transportation, social, legal, and economic issues. Discussion will explore the status and implications of the California Transit Association’s litigation efforts, discuss the process of defining and launching a possible statewide ballot initiative to protect transit funding, provide local and regional examples of successful electoral initiative efforts, and consider the role of the Association and its members in any State Constitution reform effort to fix the broken State budget process. This promises to be an informative and engaging look at the challenges confronting transit providers and advocates, and what lies ahead in the face of California’s transit funding crisis.

Plenary session speakers include Joshua W. Shaw, Executive Director of the California Transit Association; Dr. Richard Bernard, Senior Vice President of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin and Associates, one of the premier political public opinion research firms in the nation; Richard A. Marcantonio, Managing Attorney for Public Advocates, Inc.; Russell Hancock, President & Chief Executive Officer for Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Advocates, Inc; and Russell Hancock, President & Chief Executive Officer for Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Advocates, Inc.

The benefit of preventing catastrophic accidents almost always outweighs perceived liability created by the application of markings or tether straps (CAVEAT: as long as installation is done CORRECTLY.) The fact that tie-down manufacturers offer tether straps as aids in using their products is one argument in favor of adopting a strong program. Another argument is very successful implementation in various locations throughout the country. Agencies contemplating their own program can easily learn from others that have already done it.

Tether straps can also reduce injuries to vehicle operators by minimizing the physical difficulty of attaching tie-downs.

Oversight and coordination

Whichever approach is selected, it's important for legal and risk management staff to understand the program and give their blessing prior to implementation. Key to discussing is the overall liability the agency will have with the program, as compared to without it.

The purpose of such a program is to reduce the number of incidents and accidents that may occur with unsecured or under-secured mobility devices. Tippers and other hazardous movement by wheelchairs (especially scooters, either 3- or 4-wheeled) during normal operations are the most common type of incident. Tether straps can also reduce injuries to vehicle operators by minimizing the physical difficulty of attaching tie-downs.

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Tether straps can also reduce injuries to vehicle operators by minimizing the physical difficulty of attaching tie-downs.
Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program [cont.]

The first choices to be made are for the style, sizes, and colors of markings and straps to be used. Marking can be done with color-coded tape, stickers, plastic wire ties, or paint. Considerations include ease of installation and removal, acceptance by customers, and durability.

Two colors of markings can be used, the first being for the basic marking that is coordinated with the color of tether straps. The second marking color can be used for placing underneath where “permanent” type tether straps are installed. This enables tether to be re-installed properly when removed for cleaning or replacement, and so that locations marked thusly are not confused with the basic markings for “where to attach tie-downs”.

Tether straps are marketed by most of the major vehicle security equipment manufacturers. They are sold with names such as “webbing loop”, “secure loop”, and “quick strap”. The straps are also sometimes called “Stokes Straps”, after Bill Stokes, a disability advocate and consultant who helped popularize the concept in the Phoenix area. Multiple lengths of tether straps are often needed, due to wide variations in wheelchair frame sizes and configurations. This is especially important when the straps will be left on wheelchairs “permanently”.

The protruding loop of the strap should be kept as short as needed to allow for attaching tie-downs. This is important for a number of reasons. First, excess length and flexibility can contribute to less secure tie-downs (for this same reason, markings should always be tried first, and tether straps used only when markings aren’t feasible). Second, straps that are too long can get caught on other parts of the wheelchair or other objects, or can drag on the ground and become damaged. For comparison, attachment points on WC-19 compliant wheelchairs are about 2.5 inches long and 1 inch wide. This size allows for both hooks and the types of buckles used on older tie-down systems. Tether straps are usually best kept to a usable length of around 3 to 4 inches (except for sometimes on central seat pillars, which may require slightly longer ones to facilitate access).

Some styles of straps have features that help keep them in place when used on a “permanent” basis. Colors can be chosen to promote visibility, and lighter/brighter colors can make them easier to see and use. The straps sold by tie-down manufacturers are tested to appropriate standards. Using straps that are not tested could create additional liability.

Variety of tether strap styles, lengths, and colors

Older power wheelchair with markings only
(yellow tape)

In addition to a supply of marking materials and tether straps, installers should have examples of each of the major types of tie-downs used in local fleets (at least the smallest, “most restrictive” example). These are used to determine if the mobility device can accept tie-downs. If they can, markings can be applied. This includes marking any WC-19 style attachment loops that may be built into the wheelchair. The reason for this is so markings are consistent on all wheelchairs, and so they’re easily visible (WC19-compliant labeling is often small, and not visible from various angles in actual on-board environments).

Caltrans Reaches Out to Stakeholders

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Mass Transportation (DMT) has been busy recently. When the Caltrans-administered Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program received $32.2 million in Recovery Act funds for Federal Fiscal Year 2009, DMT went right to work. In July and August, a team of four DMT staff, including the Federal Grants Office Chief and Branch Chiefs traveled across the state to conduct Recovery Act Workshops at ten of the twelve Caltrans District Offices, they instructed local agency partners on use of the Recovery Act funds.

To ensure that all those who needed to get the message were involved, CalACT worked in coordination with DMT, to organize the workshops, including outreach, online registration and a working lunch at each event. Each workshop included a program overview, and a discussion of the issues and procedures related to implementation, reporting, reimbursement, monitoring, civil rights requirements, and procurement processes. Copies of the presentations were made available at DMT’s website at http://www.dot.ca.gov/hr/MassTrans/ARRA-new.html and teleconferencing was available for those who could not attend the workshops in person.

While the main focus of each workshop was ARRA, DMT looked at the assembled audiences as opportunities to also discuss the Public Transportation Modernization, Improvement, and Service Enhancement Account (PTMSEA) (Prop. 1B) Program, a timely discussion since long-awaited program funding was released during the workshops.

More than 230 individuals, representing 150+ organizations involved in providing transportation services, attended the workshops. Participants included transportation agencies and operators, councils of government, metropolitan planning organizations, Caltrans District Transit Representatives, and other interested parties. There was much dialogue and interaction with the participants. Comment cards were distributed as a way to obtain feedback, questions, or requests. Workshop comments proved to be overwhelmingly positive.

Continued on page 24
Creative Bus Sales has multiple "piggyback" bid options available from local agencies & other California consortium contracts. Bids are available for Type I, Type II, Type III & Type IV small paratransit buses from Startrans, EL Dorado, Starcraft Bus and Kusher Coach.

Please contact Creative Bus Sales at 800.326.2877 for more information. We will be contacting all California transportation agencies with more information in the coming weeks.

**SAVE THE DATE**: To follow up on last year's Italian Feast, Creative Bus Sales will be hosting another extravagant cocktail party Tuesday night following the opening reception of the CTA convention in Pasadena on October 27th.

Full details to be announced shortly, please visit us at Expo booth #138 and booth 5-8.

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Saving Fuel and the Environment [cont.]

and we expect similar seasonal savings in the fall. At 54% idle time reduction, the fuel and CO2 savings really add up quickly. (Note: Different auto off criteria were used for buses to determine the most effective way to reduce idle time).

How does Paratransit, Inc. feel about running Eco-Star? Linda Deavens, CEO of Paratransit, Inc. may have been a bit skeptical when the pilot first started, but after the first set of numbers were reported, she became a believer. “The potential impact Eco-Star can have on our fuel costs and CO2 emissions is significant” Deavens reported. She also added that they “…are looking forward to seeing the full year results which will include the cooler temperatures in the fall and greater idle reduction levels.” The drivers who interact with Eco-Star everyday feel just as optimistic about the product and results. Marc Harvey, a bus driver for Paratransit Inc., commented that the use of Eco-Star is “…easily incorporated into his routine [and] makes a good conversation piece with passengers.” Dan Heidelburg, another driver said it has been a “good experience… [and] would add it to the whole fleet.”

Given the economic times and the push for green technology, all companies are looking for ways to save money and help the environment. Eco-Star is a proactive, automatic solution to do both. El Dorado National and ARBOC are two of the bus manufacturers who have installed Eco-Star on buses for customers and are prepared to help you reach your fuel economy goals. To learn more, contact InterMotive Vehicle Controls at 800-969-6080.

Training and Education

Training is vitally important for any staff members who will perform installation of markings or tether straps. Staff selected should have familiarity with vehicle operations and accessibility, and have should have good customer service skills. Staff should be assigned to this task on an ongoing basis, since the “experience base” of working with the variety of mobility devices will build CUMULATIVELY. It is best to have the job done by a small number of people who can confer with each other, for consistency and identifying issues.

Training can be done with the same wheelchairs used for securement training for vehicle operators (as long as at least three or four of the basic types are included). Even better is a visit to a local wheelchair dealer for practicing with the wide variety of wheelchair shapes and sizes available today. This approach also allows the dealer to explain wheelchair and scooter construction features, while at the same time themselves learning about the transit agency’s program and overall accessibility.

Education can be done via brochures, flyers, posters, press releases, website information, and vehicle postings. Promotional and educational materials can be targeted to various audiences, such as customers, vehicle operators and supervisors, and community agencies. ■

Developing a Wheelchair Marking and Tether Strap Program [cont.]

Continued from page 22

Wheelchair with tether straps installed.

If tie-downs cannot be properly attached to the mobility device, tether straps can be used. It’s important to test the various types and models of tie-downs customers may encounter, because small variations in hook/buckle shapes or sizes can affect attachment capabilities.

Wheelchair with tether straps installed

A digital camera can be used to take photos of the final installation for filing. Standardized forms should be developed for recording all pertinent information. Other useful items are scissors, cleaning supplies for preparing marking locations, a kneeling pad or cushion (installation can require getting down on the floor!), a tape measure for checking securement dimensions, and small hand tools for working tethers into tight spaces.

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Saving Fuel and the Environment

By Marc Ellison

Colfax – If you could reduce your fuel costs by $300/yr per cut-away bus and reduce harmful CO2 emissions at the same time, would you do it? Excessive idling is eating into your budget every day of every week...but there is something you can do about it and Paratransit, Inc. is an organization taking advantage of the new technology. They are running the Eco-Star, anti-idling system on a test group of 6 buses and reaping the benefits.

The facts tell the story...It is more fuel efficient to turn a warm engine off, and then restart it, than it is to let the engine idle for more than 5 seconds (remember that the next time you sit in the fast food drive thru lane). What does this mean in terms of fuel consumption? According to Altoona test results, idling consumes approximately 0.61 gallons of fuel per hour of idle time on a typical V8 gas engine. Now look at your own fleet’s operation to determine what these facts mean to your bottom line...How many times does your average bus idle in Park for more than 5 seconds each day (e.g. loading and unloading passengers)? How much time do those 5+ second stops add up to per day? Per year? Now multiply that number by the number of cut-away buses in your fleet and you will see how much fuel (and therefore money) you are idling away. The answer may astonish you.

Now how would you like to get these benefits all automatically? Eco-Star is an automatic, stop/start, anti-idling system that works on buses built on Ford and GM chassis. Install it and forget it. Eco-Star automatically turns off the engine but not battery power. By leaving the ignition on, the electrical load of the vehicle is fully operational – allowing for usage of the lift, lights, radio, etc... When the driver presses the service brake Eco-Star automatically restarts the engine – all without the driver ever touching the key. If any of the “engine off” conditions are no longer valid after Eco-Star has turned off the engine, then Eco-Star automatically restarts the engine without driver intervention. Because it is a passive system for the driver, management no longer needs to sound their drivers to stop idling unnecessarily. It’s all automatic, repeatable and reliable.

Earlier this year, Paratransit, Inc. volunteered to participate in a test by having 6 buses equipped with Eco-Star. Using the data collected starting in May, the results could be calculated. Average idle time reduction for the 6 buses is 18.4%. When the May, June, and July numbers were annualized, the yearly estimates are as follows...Gallons of fuel saved in a year ~ 98.5 gal / bus; Average idling hours eliminated in a year ~161 hrs / bus; and CO2 eliminated in a year ~ 1,871 lbs. What makes the data more impressive is that the test is being run during the summer months when the system is less active. Eco-Star will not turn off the engine when the A/C is on (for passenger comfort). The biggest savings for buses in California are likely to happen in the spring and fall when ambient temperatures are more moderate. In fact, earlier spring testing revealed idle time reduction from a low of 24% to a high of 54%

By Jeff Wagner

In a resounding victory for those who provide and those who depend on public transit in California, the State Supreme Court late yesterday rejected the Schwarzenegger Administration’s appeal of a lower court ruling that annual raids on transit funding are illegal.

By declining to accept the Petition for Review filed by state officials, the high court upheld the ruling of the Third District Court of Appeal that recent funding diversions violated a series of statutory and constitutional amendments enacted by voters via four statewide initiatives dating back to 1990.

“By denying the state’s appeal, the Supreme Court has affirmed once and for all what we always maintained was true: that it’s illegal to shift dedicated state transit funds away from transit agencies and their riders,” said Joshua Shaw, Executive Director of the California Transit Association and lead plaintiff in the case. “This decision validates our position that this practice has been illegal since even before 2007, and that the definition of mass transportation adopted by lawmakers since then to mask these diversions is illegal.”

Public transit officials now hope to work with the Administration and Legislature to restore those funds since the Association filed the initial lawsuit in October, 2007, on the heels of the 2007-08 state budget package that raised $1.19 billion from the Public Transportation Account (PTA). Since that agreement, more than $3 billion in transit funding has been re-routed to fill holes in the General Fund.

“This is a clear victory for the millions of Californians who depend every day on public transit to get to work, go to school and access vital health care facilities,” said Michael Burns, General Manager of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority and Chair of the Association’s Executive Committee. “Public transit has certainly borne more than its fair share of the budget burden in recent years, and we see the effects of that throughout the state in the form of fare increases, transit service reductions, job layoffs and more. We’re very hopeful that the high court’s decision will now enable us to work with lawmakers to restore these funds and help us to meet the ever-increasing demands for transit services in California.”

In its original lawsuit, the Association maintained that several successful ballot measures -- from 1990’s Proposition 116 through Proposition 1A of 2006 -- established the PTA as a trust fund and require that PTA revenues must be spent on “mass transportation purposes.”

The initial Superior Court decision, issued in January of 2008, ruled that the 2007-08 budget violated the law by diverting $409 million from the PTA to reimburse the General Fund for past debt service payments on Proposition 108 bonds. The ruling declared that the shift “does not serve any transportation planning or mass transportation purpose.” At the same time, however, the Court permitted an additional $779 million transfer from the PTA to cover home-school busing and other programs that public transit advocates argued did not meet the definition of “mass transportation” as expressed in Proposition 116, which voters approved with the intent of establishing the PTA as a trust fund to support true public transportation service.

Just two weeks after the Superior Court ruling, the Legislature re-instated the $409 million worth of cuts by reconfiguring the law on which the court’s decision was based, meaning that the entire $1.19 billion rightfully intended for public transportation funding had been raided. The Association filed its appeal of the Superior Court decision last September.

On June 30 of this year, the appellate court dismissed the State’s claims that it is legal to divert PTA revenues before they are deposited in the PTA, and also that it is within the purview of the Legislature to transfer “spillover” funds from the PTA to the Mass Transportation Fund (MTF). The MTF was created in 2007 by budget writers as a mechanism to perpetrate the diversion of transit funding to non-transit purposes,” Shaw explained. “By shifting PTA money into the ‘Mass Transportation Fund’, they sought to create a veneer of legitimacy for these diversions. The appellate court rejected this legerehand.”

Congratulations to the California Transit Association for their success in winning the lawsuit to protect transit funding.
Chair, George Sparks

New Initiatives

When I think about the history of CalACT, I tend to use the new programs and innovative solutions that were started, nurtured and made a reality by CalACT as my benchmarks. The first of these milestones was founding an association focusing on the needs and concerns of small and medium operators, as well as providers of rural and specialized services in California. Among CalACT’s other achievements was the formation of an insurance pool for nonprofit providers which is now Non Profits United, and the implementation of Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP). I would like to highlight two new initiatives from CalACT that I hope will become milestones as well.

Vehicle Procurement Partnership

Vehicle procurement is a difficult issue for many nonprofit and smaller public operators. Most depend on the State of California contract to secure vehicles that meet funding source standards. Some of our members have expressed a desire to have options beyond the State contract and CalACT has begun pursuing the possibility of cooperative vehicle procurement as a benefit for our membership. These efforts have taken on added importance in light of the fact that there is no State vehicle contract in place and many members need to move ahead with vehicle purchases.

CalACT is exploring the use of contracts that would provide operators with greater flexibility in determining the vehicle that best meets their needs. This “menu style” approach has been used in other states and shows great promise.

Spearheading our initiative is Joe Meer, General Manager of Morongo Basin Transit Authority. Joe has moved ahead rapidly to make the first CalACT cooperative vehicle procurement a reality. We plan to provide purchase options for Type I, II, and III vehicles at a minimum. In the meantime, CalACT staff is compiling a list of FTA compliant contracts for “piggybacking.” If you are interested in participating or want more information, contact Jacklyn Montgomery at CalACT or Joe Meer at (760) 366-2986.

Health Insurance

CalACT is working with Access Services, Inc. along with other member agencies on developing a program to allow CalACT member agencies to purchase affordable medical insurance as a benefit to their employees. This issue is timely not only in light of the debates going on in Congress, but because securing affordable, dependable coverage represents a constant challenge for many small operators. Arun Prem of Access Services and a CalACT board member have taken the lead on this issue and are working with CalACT on a proposal. Expect to hear more on this program in the near future. Contact Jacklyn at CalACT or Arun at (213) 270-6000.
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For next publication date, please call 916.920.8018.
CalACT is going to San Francisco!

Meet us in San Francisco for the Spring Conference & EXPO April 20-23, 2010

CalACT is hosting the 2010 Spring Conference and EXPO at the Grand Hyatt Hotel located in Union Square in San Francisco. The Conference Committee and CalACT staff is busy preparing a great educational event with sessions designed to provide new ideas and information to transportation.

The annual CalACT Awards luncheon will be on Wednesday, April 21 followed by the EXPO. During the EXPO, you will have an opportunity to talk with vendors about their products. The evening event will feature a trolley car ride that will stop at many of San Francisco’s attractions and provide ample time to taste local cuisine.

CalACT would like attendees to utilize public transit to travel to the conference this year. Therefore, CalACT will present the “Pilgrim’s Progress” award to an attendee traveling the greatest distance to the conference by means of public transit and/or human powered vehicles. Previous winner, Charlie Anderson, traveled 329 miles by Amtrak, bus and bicycle to attend the 2000 CalACT Conference in Lake County. You can track your progress on a Pilgrim’s Progress Award Entry Form as you travel, or you may complete an entry form at the conference. Entry forms will be available on the CalACT website or at the conference registration table.

San Francisco is a very walk-able city, dotted with landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz and the largest Chinatown in the United States. A stroll of the City’s streets can lead from Union Square to North Beach to Fisherman’s Wharf, with intriguing neighborhoods to explore at every turn. Views of the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay are often laced with fog, creating a romantic mood in this European, yet American city. Therefore, we hope you will visit some of these sites during your free time or stay thru the weekend to unwind after the conference.

If you would like to submit an abstract to make a presentation at the conference please send it to Jacklyn@calact.org by November 15 to be considered by the committee. Early bird registration will begin November 15, 2009 for savings on registration rates and EXPO fees.