

Indiana Rural Transit Assistance Program
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INDIANA DISPATCH

*A Newsletter for Indiana's
Transportation Professionals*



Who else in your agency could benefit from the Indiana Dispatch?

Route to: _____

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For additional resources please visit: rlsandassoc.com

CALENDAR

March 2007 CLASSES

- 03/07/07 Defensive Driving @ DSI/RTAP
03/10/07 Emergency Procedures / Evacuations
@ Shelbyville
03/16/07 Defensive Driving @ Plymouth
03/17/07 Defensive Driving @ Warsaw
03/31/07 Defensive Driving @ Richmond

APRIL 2007 CLASSES

- 04/04/07 Defensive Driving @ DSI/RTAP
04/14/07 Roadeo Prep @ Johnson Co.
04/21/07 PAT @ Clinton Co.
04/28/07 State Roadeo @ Columbus

MAY 2007 CLASSES

- 05/02/07 Defensive Driving @ DSI/RTAP
05/12/07 Pre-Trip Inspection @ Johnson Co.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: To ensure that
this newsletter is relevant to your
needs, we would appreciate your
input. Please send us article sugges-
tions, agency news, coordination
activities, "best practices," etc.

Do you know of someone from
another agency who would like a
copy of this newsletter? Do you
want to be removed from our
mailing list? Give us a call...



Another Roadeo?

Every year about this time the RTAP staff or someone from the INCOST board puts together an article to promote the Roadeo for the first quarter issue of the Indiana Dispatch. After reviewing the articles of years past, they all seem rather repetitive, and while boasting the benefits of participating and competing in the Roadeo, have become a boring read. It is almost as if you could look at the title and say "Ah, yeah, yeah it's that time again! So, anyone wanna play?" That said, I have thought long and hard about all of the Roadeos I have been a part of since I started in transit and what they have meant to me.

I started out at a non-profit agency in Columbus, IN and during my first couple of years there, when it came time for the Roadeo, I simply was not interested in giving up a Saturday for some "silly event." As I moved from the Coordinator's position into the Transit Manager's position, it became necessary for me to attend the Roadeo, as I had also become involved in INCOST. I was still not enthused about giving up a Saturday, and was only half-heartedly in attendance, at least, initially. Once there and the festivities began, a warm fuzzy feeling came over me as I became excited for the drivers. It was all about them!

Drivers and their supervisors begun to pour in from around the state and register for the event, donning their state Roadeo t-shirt, and gearing up for the day's events. The DJ was playing music, and people were mingling. Some were dancing while enjoying doughnuts and coffee. The Roadeo was kicked off with the National Anthem and a welcome speech; the excitement grew. Everybody was smiling and having a good time the entire day regardless of how they performed, or thought they might have performed. Drivers were supporting one another even though they had just met that morning. At the end of the day, the winner was announced, and I left feeling as though I had been a part of something special.

Now as a member of the RTAP staff, I continue to look forward to the Roadeo each year, for many of the same reasons I found a desire to want to be a part of the Roadeo the first year. It is for the drivers! It is an opportunity to meet and speak with people from different parts of the state and support them in an event that is intended to focus solely on their skills and abilities. It is an event where drivers and their managers can come together one day each year and have a good time together regardless of what mother nature throws at us, and identify Indiana's driver of the year!

This year's Annual Indiana Para-Transit Roadeo will be held on Saturday April 28th at Cereland Park in Columbus, IN. Keep a close eye on your mailbox for your Roadeo info pack. See you there!



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Driving Indiana's Economic Growth



Dear RTAP: I had a driver do something really stupid the other day resulting in his injury while on the vehicle. Unfortunately, the driver did not report the injury to me until the next day. I was so shocked at what had happened that I felt it appropriate to have the driver tested under reasonable suspicion. I want to make sure I have safe people on the road. Am I on the right track?

Signed, Reasonably Concerned!

Dear Reasonably Concerned,

Unfortunately, stupidity does not justify reasonable suspicion testing under the Federal Transit Administration's drug and alcohol testing regulations. As much as we would like to find an explanation for why people behave the way they do sometimes, this is not an acceptable criterion for utilizing this element of the FTA program. The criteria for testing under the Reasonable Suspicion testing category are very clearly defined in the regulations.

The criteria that a supervisor must use to determine reasonable suspicion testing is defined under 49 CFR Part 655.43(b), which specifically states: an employer's determination that reasonable suspicion exists shall be based on specific, contemporaneous (happening right now), articulable (be able to write it down) observations concerning the appearance, behavior, speech, or body odors of the covered employee. A supervisor or other company official who is trained in detecting the signs and symptoms of drug use and alcohol misuse must make the required observations.

In other words, just because someone has done something stupid, it is not justifiable behavior in itself to warrant a reasonable suspicion test. A properly trained supervisor must be able to articulate other observations in addition to the behaviors that are consistent with probable drug abuse or alcohol misuse, such as body odor, slurred speech, dilated or fixed pupils, sloppy appearance, or aggressive or argumentative behavior. These are just some of the examples utilized in making a reasonable suspicion determination.

In addition, the observation must be based on what is happening right then with the covered employee, and not the next day when an incident is reported. It is also necessary to make sure that all of your supervisors are appropriately trained in making reasonable suspicion determinations based on the signs and symptoms of drug use and alcohol misuse! If you or any of your supervisors within your organization need reasonable suspicion training, please contact the RTAP office to schedule a class. You may also contact RTAP for further technical assistance or guidance on drug and alcohol related issues at (800) 709-9981.

RTAP ANNUAL REPORT 2006

The Indiana Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) Annual Report summarizes the RTAP accomplishments for the past year and provides an opportunity to review where the Program has been, as well as an opportunity to look into the future of where RTAP needs to go. The RTAP staff has been busier than ever this year, training requests significantly increasing as the Program and its updated materials have become more visible and popular to transit providers throughout the state. In addition, the Indiana RTAP has had multiple requests from other states to borrow materials from its resource room and to share the training materials utilized in Indiana creating a broad based networking opportunity for Indiana RTAP with other states.

Indiana RTAP continues to provide regional-based Defensive Driver training out of the Columbus location for

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Do PPC Operators Have to Stop At Rail Crossings

It has been asked recently at several different RTAP trainings if operators of transit vehicles required to hold a Public Passenger Chauffeurs license (PPC) are required to stop at railroad crossings.

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) is any self propelled or towed motor vehicle used on a highway in interstate commerce to transport passengers or property. This would include vehicles used or designed to carry more than eight (8) passengers. These vehicles do require the driver for a transit system to obtain a Public Passenger Chauffeurs license in order to operate the vehicle.

Anyone utilizing a vehicle that meets the definition of a CMV transporting passengers must stop at all railroad crossings. These vehicles must stop no closer than fifteen (15) feet and no further than fifty (50) feet from the nearest rail of the railroad crossing. The operator must listen through an open door or window and look in both directions to determine whether it is safe to cross. This rule does not apply to abandoned or unused tracks or railroad tracks that are marked as "tracks out of service" by a sign.

The Indiana drivers test for Public Passenger Chauffeurs specifically addresses the requirement of PPC operators to stop at railroad crossings. Operators currently holding a PPC should already be aware of this requirement, but systems should reinforce and educate operators to ensure that the rules are being followed. For questions concerning FMCSA requirements please refer to 49 CFR Parts 390 and 398 or feel free to contact the RTAP program at 800-709-9981.



Public Transit Continues To Expand

On Wednesday, January 24th the Henry County commissioners approved a contract for a cooperative effort between the Henry County Sheriff's Department and LifeStream Services, Operator of The New InterUrban that will expand public transportation services throughout Henry County beginning February 1st.

New Transit Planner

Jason Casteel, a six-year INDOT employee, comes to the Transit Office from our Permits Section, where he worked with trucking companies on moving loads over 200,000 pounds; published the state's oversize/overweight detour bulletin and bridge clearance maps; and worked as the computer liaison for the Division of Highway Operations. Jason is a graduate of Warren Central and Walker Career Center with a Certificate in Industrial Electronics, and is a student of Ivy Tech State College. In his spare time, he enjoys Math, History, Strategic Simulations, and Amateur (Ham) Radio. Jason can be reached at (317)234-5161, or via e-mail at JCASTEEL@indot.IN.gov.

State Senate Passes Bill to Study Light Rail System

The state Senate passed a bill this week that calls for a feasibility study of commuter rail from Indianapolis to Muncie. The bill, sponsored by Senator Tim Lanane, D-Anderson, was approved earlier this week on a 49-0 vote and heads to the House. The train route to be studied would include possible stops at Anderson, Noblesville, and Fishers. The study would look at routes, ridership, and the estimated cost of building such a system, with the findings to be completed by August 2008.

House Bill 1334

This bill would restore the Public Mass Transportation Fund (PMTF) rate back to .76% from its current rate of .635%. The bill is being co-authored by Bill Crawford and Larry Beull. The percentage increase would raise the total PMTF fund by an estimated seven million dollars.

Statewide Ridership

The statewide transit ridership for Calendar Year 2006 is 34,452,341, an increase of 910,247, or 3%, from Calendar Year 2005. Let's all keep up the good work!

agencies who struggled with the ability to meet the minimum requirement of having ten (10) participants to host a class. This class has been held on the first Wednesday of every month, and there has been noted interest in other regional- based class options.

To the pleasant surprise of the RTAP staff, the total number of individual classes successfully conducted in 2006 was a whopping ninety-four (94), up almost 30% over 2005. Further 1,816 drivers across the state, 67% more than in 2005, were trained on the various RTAP topics offered. The RTAP staff credits the significant increase in class requests and participation to the Program's increased visibility and upgraded training materials. The chart below illustrates Indiana RTAP classes conducted and transit drivers trained over the last five years.

Year	Classes Conducted	Drivers Trained
2002	82	1322
2003	71	1167
2004	61	1012
2005	73	1087
2006	94	1816
Total	381	6404

The Master Driver Program (MDA) has been a very effective tool in encouraging drivers to take ownership of their training needs and strive towards a goal of achieving a training status. In 2006, Indiana RTAP awarded forty-three (43) drivers MDA certificates and patches to recognize their achievements. In 2007, the Indiana RTAP Program looks to add a second level to the Master Driver Program in an effort to maintain the intent of the Program and to continue to encourage drivers to maintain ownership and interest in their own training needs. In addition, Indiana RTAP provides scholarships or tuition and expenses for individuals to attend training courses or workshops. In 2006, Indiana RTAP awarded ten (10) scholarships to transit managers to attend conferences and workshops outside the state of Indiana.

The Indiana RTAP staff was given the authority by the Indiana Department of Transportation to provide oversight and regulatory guidance to the Federal Transit Administration drug and alcohol testing program within the state. The RTAP staff accomplishes this task through drug and alcohol compliance audits, vendor audits, technical assistance, and the annual review of system policies and annual submission of MIS reports. Over the last six years that the RTAP Program has been providing this oversight, forty-three (43) compliance reviews have been completed. Eight compliance reviews were completed in 2006.

Since the RTAP Program was first introduced in Indiana, a newsletter, the Indiana Dispatch, has been published informing systems of available training and important industry news. This year Indiana RTAP has attempted to provide more articles featuring individual systems in Indiana communicating this need for articles through the Indiana Council on Specialized Transportation. Indiana RTAP received an enormous response from several transit providers and has run multiple articles featuring five different transit systems or topics from those systems. The Indiana Dispatch is published quarterly.

In addition to the quarterly newsletter, the Indiana RTAP website continues to be an effective method for communicating training dates, information, newsletters, RTAP-related information, and technical assistance. In 2006, the website had a total of 1,597 visitors with 1,065 of them visiting the training web page. The RTAP website also maintains pages and information for the Indiana Council on Specialized Transportation (INCOST) whose web pages see a combined total of 341 visitors to both the INCOST page and the Rodeo.



Northwest Indiana Community Action Corporation

Rider Guide and Rider's Responsibilities Guide By Tom Phillips

Northwest Indiana Community Action Corporation (NWICA) is a Demand Response Provider (DR) in Lake County, with 24 vehicles, serving a population of 484,746 residents. In 2006, NWICA decided to do something revolutionary: publish a Rider's Guide and Rider's Responsibilities Guide to inform the public about Demand Response services.

"We wanted to drop the curtain of inaccuracy surrounding Demand Response transportation," says Tom Phillips, Transportation Manager for NWICA. "It was apparent that the community believed that DR services were only for the elderly or for medical appointments."

The design and implementation of the guides took some planning. NWICA assessed that the best format for the guides was a tri-panel brochure. Passengers were surveyed and input was gathered from local area agencies. All ADA issues were addressed and are available in Braille, Large Print, Spanish, and Audio Cassette. "We even went as far as to speak with Akra Santo at the Washington office of the ADA to ensure ADA compliance," states Phillips. Phillips continues, "We wanted to separate the information necessary to ride from our formal no-show policy. The information needed to book a ride is in the Rider's Guide and the no-show policy is contained in the separate Rider's Responsibilities Guide."

"We were delighted with the response," continues Phillips, "The first run of brochures numbered over 14,000."

The result of the program is still coming into focus almost a year later. At present, NWICA reports that the most popular trip has shifted from medical visits to low income employment for the first time in agency history. The agency no show rate dropped from 11 to 3 percent.

If you would like to discuss the development of a guide of your own or take a look at the NWICA guides, you may email Tom Phillips at tphillips@nwi-ca.org

RTAP Annual Report 2006 *continued from page 3*

In addition to managing the INCOST web page, Indiana RTAP has continued its partnership with INCOST by participating in a number of activities, including:

Co-hosting training, INCOST's annual conference, and the INCOST State Roadeo for Indiana's drivers;

Providing a full scholarship to the winner of the Roadeo to attend and compete in the National Roadeo, last year in Orlando, FL; and

Providing assistance with speaker fees for the annual INCOST conference; assisting with the conference preparations; and providing the RTAP resource room.

This is a series of reports submitted annually by INCOST Board of Directors Executive Committee members. This was submitted by the current INCOST Treasurer.



Challenging INCOST

At the August 2006 Board of Directors Meeting, then President Sue Chapple, presented a challenge to the board to make INCOST all it can be for its membership. Sue and I had a lengthy discussion following that meeting where we shared our hopes and dreams for the future of INCOST. Little did I realize that I would be leading the charge in 2007. We knew at the time that it would require hard work from the entire board and many willing INCOST members to make it happen, and it is happening.

I am so very pleased to report that every INCOST committee has met to set goals, objectives, and a budget for 2007. In January, we had four committee meetings in Frankfort, one in Terre Haute, two in Columbus and one in Lafayette. I attended each and every meeting, and I found the level of enthusiasm, vision, and leadership that Sue and I had hoped for. The Board of Directors and many volunteers have answered Sue's challenge. This year, INCOST will be ALL IT CAN BE FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP.

Many of you already know that INCOST is working with Roland Mross of CTAA and the United We Ride initiative to get vital information to Family Social Services Administration (FSSA) regarding the needs and struggles of rural transportation in providing Title III-B trips. Many of our members are dealing directly with this issue and we are thankful that INCOST is being included in these forums to present this information on your behalf.

The Legislative Committee has plans to meet with state and federal legislators after creating a presentation on the benefits of funding rural transportation systems. They also want to provide the membership with the tools to become effective advocates of rural transit.

The Roadeo Committee is in full swing with the preparations for the annual Roadeo, to be held at Cereland Park in Columbus, IN, on April 28. The Committee is creating new informational brochures and packets, which will add, some 'zing' to an already fine-tuned INCOST project.

The Conference Committee is working hard to set the schedule for our Annual gathering, which will kick-off with the Annual Dinner Meeting and Awards Presentation on Wednesday night, September 26. So, mark your calendars for September 26 thru 28. You will not want to miss this year's conference!!

Finally, we will hold a one-day Summer Workshop this year. This is something we haven't done in many years. It will provide another opportunity for training in what we believe will be a pertinent subject for all providers whether you are a public transit or human service provider.

There is so much more to write about, but so little space. Just one more thing I want to mention: **Membership renewals are now due for 2007. Please do not wait to sign up!**

Debra Thornhill
INCOSt President

