

**ASTV Stakeholder Meeting**  
**May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2007**  
**Reno, NV**

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## Meeting Notes

Mokhtee Ahmad, FTA Region 7 Administrator, opened the meeting by giving an overview of the Advanced Small Transit Vehicle (ASTV) Program and its research partners, FTA and NDSU. He introduced the presenters and the audience introduced themselves as well. Mr. Ahmad then gave an update as to what the ASTV program entails as well as its history over the past 1 ½ years.

Del Peterson, Associate Research Fellow for the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center at North Dakota State University, presented results from a small transit vehicle market study as it pertains to the ASTV program. He highlighted that the industry has been stagnant over the past 10-15 years with respect to technological advancements and only now due to outside forces, ie. increasing gas prices, is new technology beginning to take a stronger foothold in the market.

Scott Kearney, Vice President of Strategic Services for Hidalgo & DeVries along with Fran Kernodle, President of Frances Kernodle Associates presented their proposal and work plan for a medium sized transit vehicle study they will be conducting. Their focus will be on cutaway vehicles and not transit vans or small buses. They are also planning to study both public and private entities that utilize cutaway vehicles to gain a better understanding of the industry's current makeup.

Questions regarding the medium sized bus study included concerns over transit agencies that have been chosen to analyze for the research. Meeting attendees felt that the chosen agencies did not accurately represent a rural component for the research efforts. Studying the private sector market for cutaways was also questioned in that private sector issues would be very different than public issues and would add little to the research findings.

Santo Grande, Director of Delmarva Community Services, led discussion for the ASTV program. Concerns regarding the ASTV program included the lack of AASHTO representation, the ability to commingle school children with public transit riders, and the inability of rural transit providers to raise the 20% match necessary to procure an ASTV.

Life cycle costing was also thought to be inaccurate from a rural perspective. Vehicles are running up to 40,000 miles a year in rural areas and will not last for 8-10 years as advertised. Wheelchair lifts are also problematic. Manual ramps are much more efficient in vans and low-floor vehicles, and do not wear out as quickly. Many state run small vehicle procurements use negotiated bid to include quality issues in an effort to eliminate low-bid problems. Some attendees also felt that the Altoona testing program was not accurate or feasible for small transit vehicles.

Mr. Ahmad closed the discussion by thanking everyone for attending and providing valuable input throughout this research effort.