

## SURTC Co-Hosts APTA Conference



Photo: MATBUS

The American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) Public Transportation and Universities Conference was held June 16-19 in Fargo, co-hosted by MATBUS, SURTC, and North Dakota State University. NDSU students, faculty, and staff were among the presenters, panelists, and attendees at the conference.

This biennial conference delves into the unique needs of university communities and the populations they serve. From land use development to marketing, this conference brought transit, university, and student leaders to Fargo to exchange ideas and see the successful collaborations

between MATBUS and NDSU. Fargo was chosen as the host of this year's conference because of its strong and successful transit partnerships with NDSU.

NDSU President Dean L. Bresciani opened the conference with a welcome to participants. Jill Hough, SURTC director, was chair of the conference, developed and moderated a panel session focusing on workforce development in public transportation, and moderated a session that highlighted the partnership between NDSU and MATBUS.

Del Peterson, SURTC researcher, discussed his research into the use of radio frequency identification technology to track and collect information from transit passengers.



Del Peterson

Elvis Ndembe, a doctoral student in the transportation and logistics program,

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### Recent highlights from the SURTC Blog:

- Presentation on NHTS Travel Behavior for Older Adults and People with Disabilities
- MATBUS and NDSU Host National Transit Conference
- 2012 Rural Transit Fact Book Published
- 2012 SURTC Research Digest Published

Visit our blog at:  
[blog.surtc.org](http://blog.surtc.org)

Editors: Jeremy Mattson and Tom Jirik



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## SURTC Celebrates Decade of Service to Transit

This summer SURTC celebrated 10 years of service to the public transportation industry. The timing was perfect, as the celebration was held in conjunction with the APTA University and Community Conference June 16-19 in Fargo. More than 130 people attended a reception at the NDSU Alumni Center to recognize SURTC's accomplishments. Dr. Denver Tolliver, UGPTI's new director, and APTA president

and CEO Michael Melaniphy were on hand to congratulate SURTC. Dr. Tolliver commented on SURTC's growth into a national program within 10 short years, and President Melaniphy commented on the depth of knowledge of SURTC staff and their eagerness to share their knowledge with individuals and students across the country.

## Message from the Director

It is an exciting summer with new trainings, new reports, and of course co-hosting the APTA University and Communities Conference with MATBUS in Fargo. Although summer is often a time for vacations and relaxing or just enjoying the summer days, SURTC staff continues to work diligently to prepare training and research materials for you. As always, thanks for reading our newsletter and please do check out our blog at [www.surtc.org](http://www.surtc.org)



*Jill Hough*

## Conference (continued)

presented information from a survey and an exploratory study conducted by SURTC to evaluate passengers' ridership behavior if buses were equipped with wireless Internet connectivity. He spoke about ways to enhance the quality of service at MATBUS with recent technological developments.



*Elvis Ndembe*

Brett Korporaal, a transportation and logistics master's student, was part of a student panel discussion that addressed partnerships between universities and public transportation and how resulting services affect students. "The university-transit partnership is critical to creating, developing and promoting a culture of public transportation in communities across America," he said. "The partnership encourages students to think about and use alternative



*Brett Korporaal*

modes of transportation, which helps students and communities realize the benefits of a safe, convenient and reliable transit system."

NDSU student body vice president Jace Beehler moderated the student panel. "This not only was a great way for the transit officials to learn what students were thinking about a variety of topics but also allowed student leaders to have many of our own questions answered," Beehler said.

Hough noted that conference presentations and tours left participants favorably impressed with both Fargo-Moorhead and NDSU. She said public transportation received significant positive media attention throughout the conference, raising the profile of the topic in the Fargo-Moorhead area. The event also was a great opportunity for NDSU students to learn how other universities partner with transit providers and to see efforts directed at workforce development by both universities and transit agencies.

"Universities play a vital role in the training and development of the

workforce that is going to be part of the transit industry," said Ankush Agrawal, NDSU transportation and logistics doctoral student. "University-transit partnerships will ensure a better trained workforce with focus on the modernization of the transit industry."

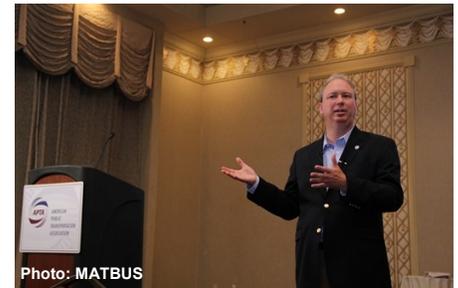


Photo: MATBUS

*APTA president Michael Melaniphy addresses the attendees*

Michael Melaniphy, APTA president and CEO, said, "APTA is thrilled that Fargo chose to be the host city for the 2012 university conference. The people here have been great hosts. We are hearing so many great things about the community embracing them. This isn't just the university putting on the conference, it's the community putting on the conference and that makes Fargo a great city to host this conference."

## SURTC Presents Tribal Transit Research at AARP Livable Communities Tour

SURTC's research on tribal transit and future funding needs were highlighted during an AARP National Policy Council Livable Communities Committee tour of rural and tribal transit in South Dakota. The committee and AARP staff members spent an entire week in South Dakota and met with transit officials and

operators from several Upper Midwest states and toured transit systems in Sioux Falls, Pierre, and Spearfish and on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Reservations. SURTC research associate Jon Mielke was invited to share research findings on several studies that he and other SURTC staff members have done regarding tribal

transit. AARP has a keen interest in personal mobility and is active in related federal legislative issues.



*Jon Mielke*

## Advanced Transit Management Course Debuts at CTAA Conference

SURTC's Advanced Transit Management course made its debut in May when it was taught to a diverse group of transit managers at the Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA) annual conference in Baltimore, MD. Transit managers from Florida, Iowa, Maine, Mississippi, Maryland, Oregon, Missouri, Minnesota, and Hawaii took the course.

Advanced Transit Management builds upon the Principles of Transit Management course by targeting experienced transit managers who want to expand their existing knowledge base and further develop their expertise and managerial skills. The course provides managers with opportunities to reinforce their passion for transit and gives them the

tools to be more effective leaders.

Topics covered include:

- Solving human resource dilemmas;
- Examining efficiency, cost containment, and service quality;
- Moving from performance measurement to performance management;
- Implementing technology;
- Evaluating service expansion or reduction; and
- Best practices in small urban and rural transportation.

Rather than strictly following a lecture format, this course engages attendees



Carol Wright

by applying real-world scenarios and participants' problem solving skills. Instructors and students tackle critical issues relative to today's transit environment, including employee challenges, current law suit concerns, safety practices, technology, and more. The take-home resources and



Keven Anderson

ready-to-implement forms are a bonus.

Instructors are Carol Wright, associate director of training & outreach, and Keven Anderson, training coordinator. For more details, contact Carol Wright at

[carol.wright@ndsu.edu](mailto:carol.wright@ndsu.edu).

## Study on Travel Behavior of Older Adults and People with Disabilities Presented

Findings from a study on travel behavior and mobility of older adults and people with disabilities were presented by SURTC researcher Jeremy Mattson at the International Conference on Aging, Mobility and Quality of Life, hosted by the University of Michigan and Elsevier, June 24-26.

The study examined 2009 National



Jeremy Mattson

Household Travel Survey (NHTS) data on driving, trip frequency, staying in the same place all day or week, miles driven per year, mode choice, use of public transportation, trip purpose, trip distance, and issues

and concerns regarding transportation. Differences between 2001 and 2009 were documented to identify trends in travel behavior.

A full report based on this research will be available this Fall. The presentation can be viewed on the SURTC website in the Staff Presentations section at [www.surtc.org/resources](http://www.surtc.org/resources).

## Hough Elected to CUTC Executive Board and Committees

SURTC Director Jill Hough was elected to a three-year term on the executive board of the Council of University Transportation Centers at the group's annual summer meeting June 20-22 at Michigan Tech in Houghton, Mich.

In her role on the executive board, she



Jill Hough

will participate in strategic planning and policy-setting efforts for the group. In particular, Hough will oversee the communications committee. She also will participate in the group's membership committee and workforce development task force.

The council represents more than 70 of the nation's leading university-based transportation research and education programs and provides a

forum for the universities and centers to interact collectively with government and industry.

Hough has been a transportation researcher with the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute for more than 20 years. She earned her doctorate in the transportation technology and policy program at the University of California-Davis.



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## 2012 Editions of *Rural Transit Fact Book* and *SURTC Research Digest* Published

SURTC has published its 2012 editions of the *Rural Transit Fact Book* and the *SURTC Research Digest*. Both can be downloaded at [www.surtc.org/resources](http://www.surtc.org/resources).

The *Rural Transit Fact Book* serves as a national resource for statistics and information on rural transit in America. This publication is an update to the *Fact Book* published in 2011. It includes rural demographic and travel behavior data as well as financial, operating, and fleet statistics and performance measures for agencies receiving section 5311 funding. In addition to national data, statistics are presented by state, FTA region, tribe, and mode, as well as other agency characteristics.



The *Rural Transit Fact Book* uses agency-level data from the Rural National Transit Database (NTD) and rural demographic and travel data from the American Community Survey and the National Household Travel Survey.

The *SURTC Research Digest* provides a number of articles discussing recently completed research projects. The articles are non-technical summaries of the full studies. This edition of the *SURTC Research Digest* includes articles on five research projects completed in 2011.



Topics covered include tribal transit funding, the cost structure of small urban transit and justifications for subsidies, impacts of the built environment on transit ridership, segmenting intercity travelers by their attitudes, and vehicle supplier attributes valued by procurement decision-makers. The intent of this publication is to make research findings accessible to a wider audience.

For more information about these publications, contact Jeremy Mattson at [jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu](mailto:jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu).