

## NDSU Pilots Mentor Program for Students

It's a case of tomorrow's transit leaders learning from today's transit leaders in the Public Transportation Course at NDSU. SURTC director Dr. Jill Hough is instructor for the course and has matched up students with industry mentors from across the country. NDSU is the pilot university for the mentor program which may be replicated nationally. Hough developed the program in response to the call from industry professionals for better workforce development within higher education.

Students are gathering valuable insight from their mentors regarding real-world transportation challenges. "The greatest



*Mridula Sarker and Linda Bohlinger*



*Elvis Ndembe and Robert Prince*

value of the program is that students are gaining a true understanding of how the industry works, rather than simply a theoretical, textbook understanding," Hough says. Mentors and students discuss a variety of topics such as transportation policies, cost-effectiveness and efficiency, managing budgets, technology application, working with workers' unions, and meeting overall challenges to organizational management.

As part of the program, the students will have the opportunity to participate in a

(Mentor continued on page 4)

## Survey Finds Decreased Funding Forcing Higher Fares and Service Cuts

Transit agencies in small urban areas are cutting service and increasing fares to cope with reduced funding and ballooning costs, according to a recent SURTC study. The survey asked transit agencies (in areas with population 50,000 to 200,000) to report any action they had taken since January 1, 2009, or actions they were considering for the future. The study collected information on changes in service

levels, fares, operational funding and ridership and inquired about the motivation behind service and fare changes, thoughts about the rationale for transit subsidies, and the role that factors such as congestion, safety, and environmental issues play in marketing transit services and obtaining funding.

(Survey continued on page 4)

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### Special points of interest:

- Pilot mentorship program launched with transportation students
- SURTC surveys small urban transit agencies on recent changes in fares, service levels, and funding
- National expertise shared with public transit class



# Message from the Director

Dr. Jill Hough

As we finish Spring Semester on the campus of North Dakota State University, we're excited to share the innovative approaches SURTC has taken with the graduate students enrolled in our public transportation class. In addition, we have completed several key research projects you may find beneficial. Finally, please watch for our upcoming *SURTC Digest*. This condensed compendium of our research from the last year will give you a more in-depth overview of our efforts. Thanks for taking the time to read and utilize our work.



Jill Hough

## National Expertise Shared with Public Transit Class

The real world paid frequent visits to NDSU's graduate-level course in public transportation during spring semester as several national leaders in transit provided guest lectures. The blend of public and private sector speakers kept the topics interesting and the dialogue fresh. On Feb. 22, William Thoms, retired law professor and specialist in transportation law, talked about the U.S. rail system, with special attention to commuter rail.



William Thoms



Michael Melaniphy

Authority and current vice president at AECOM, talked to the class about the good, bad, and the ugly of transit and the state of good repair. Prince shared guest lecture duties with Michael Melaniphy, vice president public sector for Motor Coach Industries, who discussed his experience of entering the transit field, working in the public sector, and transitioning to the private sector.



Jim Gilmour

On March 1, Jim Gilmour, director of planning for the city of Fargo, discussed the important elements of city transit planning. Linda Bohlinger, vice president and national director of management consulting for HNTB Corporation, spoke about public transit funding issues on April 5. She also discussed her career with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan

Transportation Authority and the South Florida Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority. Charles Dickson, associate director of the Community Transportation Association of America, spoke on April 12 about community transportation and the importance of coordination. The following week, Robert Prince, former general manager of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation



Charles Dickson

On April 28, Vincent Valdes, associate administrator of the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation, spoke about risk analysis, planning, and how to make the best use of limited resources. J. Barry Barker, general manager of Transit Authority of River City in Louisville, Kentucky, provided the final lecture on May 3, discussing the state of public transit and the



Vincent Valdes



J. Barry Barker

general manager's role in workforce development.

Several of the classes have been video-taped, so if you are interested in viewing a copy please contact Dr. Hough at [jill.hough@ndsu.edu](mailto:jill.hough@ndsu.edu).

## Events Calendar

APTA—2011 Bus & Paratransit Conference

May 22-25, 2011 • Memphis, TN

CTAA—2011 EXPO

June 5-11, 2011 • Indianapolis, IN

ITSA—2011 National Rural ITS Conference

Aug. 28-31, 2011 • Coeur d'Alene, ID

APTA—Expo 2011 & Annual Meeting

Oct. 3-5, 2011 • New Orleans, LA

ITSA—2011 Annual Meeting & Exposition

Oct. 16-20, 2011 • Orlando, FL

# Travel Behavior of the Lone Rangers: A Study on Intercity Market Segmentation

A recently completed study shows that attitudes toward travel time, flexibility, and privacy have the strongest influence on intercity travel behavior and mode choice. The information will be valuable to transportation policy makers and industry leaders facing long-term strategic decisions. The attitudes of intercity travelers can be used to estimate changes in mode share and develop marketing strategies. Based on the information, transportation providers could tailor or expand existing service and identify market segments for promotion and education.

The SURTC study identified eight market segments, ranging from "lone rangers" (who value flexibility and privacy) to "delicate movers" (who are sensitive to travel time but not to schedule or privacy), based on attitudes toward these three characteristics, and mode shares for automobile, air, intercity bus, intercity rail, and van service were estimated for each market segment for regional trips by residents in the Upper Midwest.

The analysis found that a decrease in travel time for intercity bus or rail service would result in these modes

capturing a much larger market share. Results also showed that market segments with higher percentages of seniors were most likely to travel by bus, train, or van for intercity trips, and were less likely to travel by air for the longer trips. The size of these market segments will continue to grow as the population ages.

The full report is available online at [www.surtc.org/research/reports.php](http://www.surtc.org/research/reports.php). For more information, contact Jeremy Mattson at (701) 231-5496 or [jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu](mailto:jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu).

## SURTC Conducts Campus Transit Study for University of North Dakota

Students at the University of North Dakota (UND) value and desire convenience from the university's campus shuttle service according to a recent SURTC study.

UND contracted with SURTC to complete a study to provide UND leadership with a better understanding of students' attitudes toward, perceptions of, and satisfaction with shuttle services. They also desired to identify service alternatives to improve both customer satisfaction and service efficiency and



*UND Campus Shuttle Bus*

effectiveness.

When asked about specific factors that influenced student mode choice, student survey respondents indicated

that convenience was the major factor considered followed by weather, time, accessibility, and parking availability. Student respondents indicated that the key benefit of the current campus shuttle system was also convenience. This benefit was followed by reduced parking demand, money savings, and reduced traffic congestion.

The full report is available online at [www.surtc.org/research/reports.php](http://www.surtc.org/research/reports.php). For more information, contact Marc Scot at (701) 231-6436 or [marc.scott@ndsu.edu](mailto:marc.scott@ndsu.edu).

## SURTC Staff Participate at TRB and TRF

Jill Hough and Jeremy Mattson participated in the Transportation Research Board's (TRB's) 90th Annual Meeting January 23-27 in Washington, DC. Hough gave two presentations: "Educating the Future Transit Workforce" and "Technology Adoption by Small Urban and Rural Transit Agencies." She also presided over the TRB Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Conference Planning Subcommittee. Mattson was involved in two poster

sessions: "Public Involvement in Transportation" and "Safe Mobility of Older Persons." In the first he provided an overview of the transit, technology, and public participation project being conducted by SURTC, and in the second he presented findings from his study on transportation, distance, and health care utilization for older adults in rural and small urban areas.

Mattson also participated in the Transportation Research Forum (TRF)



*Jeremy Mattson*

Annual Meeting March 10-12 in Long Beach, CA, where he moderated a session on transit & costs and presented "Marginal Cost Pricing and Subsidy of Transit in Small Urbanized Areas."



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### **(Mentor continued)**

roundtable discussion on "Higher Education and Workforce Development" at the 2011 American Public Transportation Association Bus and Paratransit Conference in May. Students will have an opportunity to meet their mentors in person at the conference. The students' attendance at the conference is sponsored by the Mountain-Plains Consortium.

#### Student-Mentor pairings:

Dilip Mistry and Mr. David Lee,  
General Manager of Connecticut  
Transit

Mridula Sarker and Ms. Linda  
Bohlinger, Vice President of HNTB  
Corporation

Elvis Ndembe and Mr. Robert Prince,  
Vice President of AECOM (formerly  
GM Boston)



*David Lee*



*Dilip Mistry*

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### **(Survey continued)**

Responses were received from 141 transit agencies.

Major findings are:

- 47% of transit agencies have either increased fares or reduced service, and 14% have done both.
- Two-thirds said demand for

transit service in their community is increasing, and most agencies reported limitations in their abilities to add service to meet this demand.

- 36% reported decreased operational funding from local or regional sources over the last year, while 34% said the same about state funding.
- On average, these agencies reported increased ridership since 2008.

For more information, visit the SURTC blog at [www.surtc.org/blog](http://www.surtc.org/blog) and scroll to the Jan. 19 post. Full results can also be found at <http://blog.surtc.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Service-and-fare-survey-results.pdf>. For more information, contact Jeremy Mattson at [jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu](mailto:jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu).