

Rural Transit Fact Book Details Rural Transit

SURTC has published its first annual *Rural Transit Fact Book*. This publication is intended to serve as a national resource for statistics and information on rural transit in America. Information on transit service availability and cost is necessary to efficiently and effectively meet rural community mobility needs. Financial and operating statistics can be used by agency managers, local decision makers, state directors, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and lawmakers to assist in policy making, planning, managing operations, and evaluating performance.

Despite the widespread benefits, no regularly-published national rural transit information resource has been previously made available. The *Rural Transit Fact Book* is being initiated to provide information to assist the transit industry in the United States provide valuable and



much needed service to rural communities. 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 level data, statistics are presented by state, FTA region, tribe, and mode, as well as other agency characteristics.

The publication can be downloaded at www.surtc.org/transitfactbook. For more information, contact Jeremy Mattson at: jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu

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Recent highlights from the SURTC Blog:

- Ride or Relocate Webinar Archived Online
- Rural Transit Fact Book Published
- New ADA Amendments Regarding Service Animals and Mobility Devices and the FTA
- SURTC Research Digest Published
- Education-Industry Mentorship Program Achieves Success

Visit our blog at:
www.surtc.org/blog



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New Training features Elderly Mobility and Tribal Transit

A "Ride or Relocate" webinar addressing the mobility needs of older adults and Tribal Transit Management training are two new topics in SURTC's growing list of training expertise.

In August, SURTC produced its first webinar, "Ride or Relocate" which attracted participants from across the country. The webinar



Carol Wright

featured research by Del Peterson on the difficult decision many elderly people and their families face when deciding how long to remain in their homes. His research quantified the cost of living at home and riding transit in North Dakota versus relocating to an assisted living facility. The webinar addressed the study results as well as strategies for reaching out to older adults and their adult children. It also listed resources which make it possible for them to remain independent for as long as it is feasible. Additional presenters included

(Training continued on page 2)

Message from the Director

Everyone at SURTC enjoys working with and supporting the public transportation industry. We were honored to be part of the Metro Area Transit (MAT) ad campaign. MAT featured North Dakota State University students, faculty, and staff in their year-long campaign to attract riders. MAT is entered in APTA's AdWheel competition, which will be awarded this October. We wish MAT the best in the competition. Please share your advertising ideas with us and we will post them on our blog. Check out the blog to see news events, research results, and advertising ideas. Send your blog entry to jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu and please visit www.surtc.org. Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter.

Training (continued)

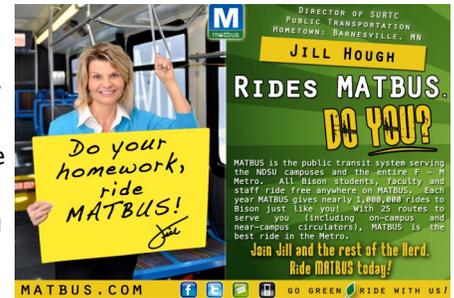
moderator, Lucinda Shannon, training & technical assistance specialist with the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) in Washington, DC; Carol Wright, associate director of training and outreach, SURTC; and Pat Hansen, executive director of South Central Adult Services Council, Inc., an organization providing in-home and community-based services in seven counties in south central ND. The webinar was co-sponsored by NCST, the Community Transportation Association of America, and the Community Transportation Assistance Program. A recording of the webinar can be accessed on SURTC's website at: www.surtc.org/training

In September, SURTC will host its first *Tribal Transit Principles of Transit Management* course in Bismarck, ND. This three-day training is being held in conjunction with the 15th Annual Northern Plains TTAP Transportation Conference, the Tribal Leaders Summit, and the United Tribes International PowWow. Tribal Transit operators from across the United States have been invited to participate in this course, which covers all aspects of tribal transit management. Lauren Tuzikow, FTA

lead for the Rural National Transit Database will be a guest speaker. In addition, Pamela Ternes, Director of Standing Rock Public Transit, which operates in North Dakota and South Dakota, and Debbie McGlasson, Director of Pelivan Transit of Oklahoma, will serve as panelists to discuss tribal governance, financing, and best practices for their tribal transportation programs. Carol Wright is the principal instructor for the course. Jon Mielke, a lead researcher on tribal transit issues with SURTC, will assist.

Additional SURTC training includes presentations at the Oregon Fall Transit Conference in Seaside, OR. Carol Wright and Dr. Al Abeson will present "*The Changing Face of America: Diversity and Its Implications for Public Transit.*" Wright and Abeson will also be presenting a workshop entitled, "*Making the Case: Transit and Elected Officials.*"

Two *Principles of Transit Management* courses are scheduled for October and November in Texas and Michigan. This three-day course is appropriate for all levels of transit managers,



front line supervisors, and those who are in a position to assist with transit operations.

For more information on training programs please visit www.surtc.org or email Carol Wright at: carol.wright@ndsu.edu

Marc Scott Completes Ph.D.



Marc Scott

Marc Scott recently completed his dissertation defense at North Dakota State University. His dissertation, *Developing Input to 'Best-Value' Vehicle Procurement Practice: An Analysis of Supplier Evaluation and Selection In the U.S. Public Transportation Industry*, will be available online this Fall. Marc will graduate from the Transportation and Logistics Program in August. Dr. Jill Hough served as his academic advisor. Marc has worked at SURTC as a graduate research assistant and intern and will work full-time as a research analyst with SURTC beginning September 1.

Events Calendar

ITSA—2011 National Rural ITS Conference

APTA—Expo 2011 & Annual Meeting

ITSA—2011 Annual Meeting & Exposition

TRB—91st Annual Meeting

Aug. 28-31, 2011 • Coeur d'Alene, ID

Oct. 3-5, 2011 • New Orleans, LA

Oct. 16-20, 2011 • Orlando, FL

Jan. 22-26, 2012 • Washington, DC

National Transit Curriculum Being Developed

SURTC director Dr. Jill Hough and Paul Larrousse, director of the National Transit Institute at Rutgers University, are leading an initiative to develop a semester-long public transit course that can be used at universities nationwide.

Currently there are at least a half-dozen public transit classes taught throughout the United States, but there is a lack of consistency in the materials covered. At the same time, other schools would like to offer such a course, but the time, effort, and

practical expertise needed to develop the materials may not be available.

The course will improve mobility and advance the transit industry by educating future decision-makers and workers on public transit issues, Hough says.

Members of the National Transit Curriculum Committee, who represent universities, transit agencies, federal government, national associations, and consultants, identified topics for the seven-module course. The curriculum will be piloted at

universities in the United States and finalized by summer of 2012.

Committee members include J. Barry Barker, Transit Authority of River City; Linda Bohlinger, HNTB Corporation; Pam Boswell and Joseph Niegowski, APTA; Ralph Buehler, Virginia Tech; Charles Dickson, CTAA; Barbara Gannon, Eno Center for Transportation Leadership; David Lee, CT Transit; James McLary, McLary Associates; Lydia Mercado, Research and Innovative Technology Administration; Vincent Valdes and Jarrett Stoltzfus, FTA.

Effects of Built Environment on Transit Ridership Studied

SURTC research shows that residential density, land use mix, and other characteristics significantly influence transit ridership. The findings were the results of a study conducted by researcher Del Peterson on the impact of the built environment on fixed-route transit ridership in the Fargo-Moorhead community.

The built environment consists of everything humanly made, arranged, or maintained. Recent studies have focused on improving the understanding of how the built

environment influences one's travel mode choice. Planners need evidence showing how land use matters as they advocate for the adoption of different



Metro Area Transit Bus

planning principles.

Policy makers looking to support land uses that increase both transit use and walkability should consider these implications. All communities can benefit from planning techniques that give travelers options rather than car-centric neighborhoods that do not provide the flexibility necessary for different transportation modes.

The full report will be available this Fall at www.surtc.org/research/reports.php. For more information, contact Del Peterson at: del.peterson@ndsu.edu

Study Finds Justification for Subsidizing Small Urban Transit

Subsidies to transit agencies result in lower average costs and increased returns, according to a recent SURTC study. Jeremy Mattson and David Ripplinger found that small urban transit agencies experience increasing returns to scale and density. This implies that increasing service levels will result in lower average costs.

A full cost model was estimated that included the addition of external costs, such as environmental effects, and benefits. A benefit of increasing service levels is a reduction in rider

waiting times. The study attempted to quantify this benefit. Results from the model were used to estimate the marginal social cost of providing service. Setting the fare equal to marginal social cost would maximize social welfare.

The results provide justification for subsidizing transit. The needed subsidy is calculated as the difference between the revenue generated by the optimal fare and that needed to maintain efficient levels of production. The rationale for subsidies is an

important issue as many agencies have experienced recent reductions in operational funding. A survey found that nearly half of transit agencies in small urban areas have either reduced service or increased fares over the last two years, primarily because of decreases in operational funding.

The full report will be available online this Fall at www.surtc.org/research/reports.php. For more information, contact Jeremy Mattson: jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu



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SURTC Research Digest Published

To disseminate research findings to a wider audience, SURTC is introducing the *SURTC Research Digest*. The highly condensed, non-technical articles in the new publication discuss recently completed research projects. The articles provide more depth and detail than the highlights published in our newsletter.

The 2011 *SURTC Research Digest* includes articles on seven research projects completed in 2010. Topics range from the mobility concerns of the elderly and people with disabilities to the impact of fuel prices on individuals' travel choices. Additional topics include technology adoption by rural transit agencies, perceptions of higher education students in regard to

employment in the public transportation industry, the role that public transportation plays in health care, and efforts to coordinate rural transit services.

The publication can be downloaded at: www.surtc.org/research/digest

APTA Conference to be held in Fargo

The American Public Transportation Association 2012 Transportation & University Communities Conference will be held in Fargo, North Dakota June 16-20. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. More details will follow.

Woman Up! *Take Control of your Career* *September 20, 2011*

The best leadership development training you'll have all year. In this SURTC-sponsored workshop, you will discover how to take control of your career and make it your own.

Location: Alumni Center
North Dakota State University

Schedule: 8:30-4:00, lunch provided

Cost: \$165

Space is limited—maximum of 30 participants for this session

More information is available at www.AchievingSkills.com/surtc