Transit Plays a Role in Alternatives for Older Drivers

By Pat Weaver

Kansas’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan supports solutions for older driver safety.

Improving safety for older drivers in Kansas is a focus of the Older Drivers’ Team of the Kansas Department of Transportation’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP). The team of representatives from state, regional and local agencies, law enforcement, health care, and advocacy organizations has been meeting for two years to develop, update and implement strategies under the 4Es: engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency services. This multi-disciplinary approach considers a variety of approaches to improve safety of older drivers, and those who share the road with them.

While the proportion of older drivers to all registered drivers has stayed

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Junction City Continues with Fixed Route Feasibility Study

By Clifton Hall

In the October 2014 issue of the Kansas TransReporter, Pat Weaver introduced a project to determine feasibility of fixed route transit in Junction City, KS. Work continues on the study, and several of the steps have been completed in examining the strength of the foundation for scheduled buses in the community. This article will summarize what has been done so far and look at the other tasks needed going forward.

Study components completed and in progress

Demographic analysis. The first step in determining feasibility of a higher level of transit service in Junction City was to analyze the demographic makeup of the community. This is an investigation of where the population lives and characteristics of people who call different neighborhoods home. In this part of the process, demographic information was taken from the US Census’s American Community Survey and entered into GIS software that was

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Older drivers

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The Kansas Strategic Highway Safety Plan contains a chapter specifically on older drivers. Above is a page from the chapter.

The number of older drivers on the road have increased as the overall number of drivers in Kansas has grown. From 2003 to 2012, drivers over the age of 65 increased from 308,000 to 344,000. These numbers are expected to grow as more and more “baby boomers” reach age 65, and we may see eventually a change in proportion of older drivers as well.

Strategies developed in the SHSP do not pre-suppose that all drivers over 65 are unsafe. In fact, their behaviors tend to be safer than younger drivers; e.g., older drivers have higher seat belt use, have a much lower incidence of DUI, and self-limit their driving in inclement weather and at night. The time to stop driving is different for everyone, but it’s important to have systems in place as alternatives to driving when that time comes. Recognizing the stress that occurs for individuals and their families when they are no longer safe to drive, and the need for access to essential services for older drivers as well.

What’s being done to improve safety for older drivers?

The purpose of the older driver strategies is not to disqualify drivers on the basis of age, but rather improve the driving environment and improve driving skills to reduce risk to older drivers and other roadway users. One of the strategies to affect the driving environment is the CarFit program. CarFit assessments improve the “fit” of the car to the individual to improve visibility. The individual is observed in his or her own vehicle, with the CarFit team making adjustments to the driver’s position within the car. In some cases, an occupational therapist is on-site to provide an assessment for modifications tailored to the individual. CarFit instructors have been trained in Kansas, and efforts are ongoing to increase the number CarFit events around the state.

Skills building includes driver training programs such as those offered by AAA’s RoadWise Driver and AARP’s SmartDriver courses. Awareness is improved through publications such as “The Seasoned Driver: Is It Time to Talk?” which includes a list of tips to conduct a self-assessment of driving “fitness.” These strategies help increase driver awareness of potential problem areas and promote safer driving. For more information on existing older driver training programs and other related resources, visit the “Older Driver” page of the Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office (http://www.ksros.org/older-drivers).

What are some options for the older non-driver?

Even with all these supports, there is likely to come a time when it’s determined (either by the individual or others) that it is no longer safe to drive. Alternatives to meet mobility needs are essential. What’s next? While it can’t solve all the access problems for older drivers, transit services in Kansas can be a key partner in creating solutions. Here are some good next steps:

Resource directories. One of the strategies identified by the Older Driver team is to provide a directory of alternative transportation (public and private transportation) to individuals at the Drivers’ License Office for those who are unable to qualify for a license renewal. The current Kansas Transit Provider Directory, which lists all the transit providers funded by the Federal Transit Administration and the Kansas Department
Where do we go from here?

One of the keys to supporting individuals who are no longer able to drive is to get the word out about the availability of transit services and help individuals to become comfortable with using transit. Getting the word out may require marketing and training not only to the individual but, possibly, family members who may be trying to find alternatives for their family member, health care professionals, social workers and other community resources. Consider the steps you can take in your community to develop transportation options and then, just as important, make sure your community knows about them.

For more information on the Older Driver Team of the Kansas SHSP, contact Gretchen Gleue, at gretchen@ksdot.org, (785) 296-0845.

Sources

Junction City Feasibility Study  Continued from page 1

Population Density for Junction City, 2013. This map shows the number of dwelling units per acre, with darker, redder colors meaning higher density.

used to make maps. These maps identify areas where the most people live per area, which is a common indicator of where transit lines and stops are ideally located.

There is also the concept of “transit dependency,” which considers where a high number of people live who won’t normally use an automobile for trips. These people include elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, those in poverty, and those living in households with one or no automobile available.

Demand estimation. Another consideration when locating fixed-route transit is the amount of total demand expected to be generated by the population when the system is fully operational. This can be done a number of ways, but the most effective technique is comparing similar “peer” transit systems to the proposed system. For Junction City, cities of similar size and area with fixed-route systems include Garden City, Hutchinson, and Salina.

To compare the system, a spreadsheet such as the one produced by the Transit Cooperative Research Program (discussed further in the April 2014 KTR article “Forecasting Paratransit Demand, Then and Now,”) can be used to calculate the demand of the proposed system, assuming people will ride at similar rates and that the transit agencies are operated similarly. While these calculations are fairly simple, using a spreadsheet makes the process much quicker and more user-friendly.

Use of Junction City’s own currently operating demand-response service was analyzed to determine use patterns, which were found to revolve around work and educational trips. This data shows that transit is already being used for regular, non-event trips in the Junction City area, which suggests that fixed-routes may simplify the transit usage process for current and potential riders. The data also shows where trips start and end, and can be used in conjunction with employer data to determine where public stops can best be located.

Transit advisory committee. While a thorough understanding of operating and demographic data is vital to creating new transit options in an area, input from community stakeholders helps give potential transit users a sense of ownership of the project and uses the collective wisdom of the community to expedite decisions and determine real needs. To do this in Junction City, a panel of community leaders, politicians, business executives, and human services directors were asked to take part in a transit advisory committee to vet the work of Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency and the KU Transportation Center. The committee has been shown a preliminary report on work done to date, and they have provided valuable input on the community and employer surveys and overall transit planning process.

Community and employer surveys. Another part of the community engagement process has been to develop two separate surveys—one for the general public and one for employers in local businesses. Questions were developed for the general public to include the likelihood of future transit usage, barriers to transit use, desired stop locations and times, and demographic information. The employer survey asks if current employees use transit, if fixed-route transit would benefit current employees, and if the business is willing to work with FHATA in providing stops, infrastructure, and other assistance to transit development. Once the survey is sent out in electronic and paper form and returned, the results will be compiled and will be used to influence planning the new service.

Preliminary route concepts. Based on the demographic and service data analyzed earlier in the process, a general idea of ideal transit locations can emerge. This is a basic look at where equally long routes can cover as much area and as many people and popular trip attractions as possible. A common assumption is that people are willing to walk ¼-mile to the nearest transit stop, so, in the process of planning routes, a ½-mile wide “buffer” is drawn around potential transit lines (¼-mile on either side of the routes.) When designing possible routes, this buffer can be used in GIS to estimate the...
number of people covered by each route and by the routes as a whole.

**Next steps**

While significant groundwork has been laid in the planning process, there are still several key challenges to implementing fixed-route transit. These include identifying funding sources, determining final routes, schedules and timing, and creating public awareness of the new system.

**Creating route concepts.** Once preliminary route concepts are identified, stop locations must be determined, and routes vetted and adjusted according to a number of criteria. This includes the presence of ADA-accessible sidewalks, street designs wide enough to carry buses, and transfer locations where the identified routes can meet. Also, the length of routes must be adjusted so that reliable, predictable schedules can be determined and routes can have similar headways. A headway is the amount of time between departures of a bus from a given stop, and ideally are the same for each stop and not more than thirty minutes to one hour. Factors such as route length, traffic patterns, and number of boardings and disembarkations affect how quickly buses move along routes and how well they follow the schedule.

**Funding and feasibility.** The crucial final step in planning new fixed-route transit service includes securing funding sources and determining the financial feasibility of operating the new routes.

Flint Hills ATA is well ahead of schedule in the grant-writing process and has applied for procurement of capital assets (buses) for the new service, based on estimates for what might be needed in Junction City. However, ridership and performance statistics will determine viability, balanced with the amount of state and federal funding available. Based on the success of fixed-route transit in nearby Manhattan, Flint Hills ATA believes a similar service in Junction City will be well received and a valuable resource for the community.

**Conclusion: Planning small city transit is an available option**

To many observers, fixed-route transit in small communities may not seem viable because they believe the numbers just aren’t there. However, proven systems exist in communities of all varieties, sizes, and cultural makeups. Sometimes success depends on individuals taking initiative, communities taking responsibility, and stakeholders finding available funding and technical assistance. Don’t count out your community’s ability to engage in the process too quickly!

For more information, the feasibility study and its origins are discussed further in the October 2014 TransReporter article “Flint Hills ATA Considering Fixed-Route Transit Service for Junction City.” Go to http://www.kutc.ku.edu/pdffiles/KTR2014-Oct.pdf.

**Source**

- Pat Weaver and Clifton Hall, “Junction City Feasibility Analysis.” KU Transportation Center, 2015.
New transit managers are faced with a long list of responsibilities, regulations and requirements. All of this can be overwhelming, especially if good documentation was not left by the previous manager. Luckily, there are a number of resources that can help—if you just know where to find them. One easily-available resource is a new online toolkit developed by the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (National RTAP) to give you the information you need “on Day-One.” It’s a resource that can help provide you with some of the information you need to know, or to learn where to go for help. This article will provide an overview of the toolkit and where to go to access it.

Who was involved in developing the toolkit?

The Transit Manager’s Toolkit was developed by a work group formed by members who are either current or former National RTAP Review Board members. The work group includes both transit agency managers and State DOT transit program managers, from Alaska to Oklahoma to Massachusetts.

What’s in the toolkit?

The toolkit is organized around four major topics:

- Administration and compliance
- Operations
- Tribal transit
- Resources

The Administration and Compliance section provides guidance on topics such as writing a mission statement, 5311 grant management requirements, and compliance with regulations associated with ADA, drug and alcohol testing, Civil Rights and procurement. Where appropriate, the toolkit provides a link to a specific page of the FTA circular to help find additional details if needed.

The Operations section covers service planning and evaluation, coordination and mobility management, safety and security, and emergency management. This section will help you if you’re thinking about making changes to your service, or coordinating with other services in your community. It will also help you make sure you’ve implemented comprehensive procedures to keep your passengers, your employees and your facilities safe.

Management of tribal transit programs differ from Section 5311 program since tribes are eligible as direct grantees from FTA as well as funding from the Section 5311 program from State DOTs. This section of the handbook provides additional guidance in recognition of the unique requirements. This section includes four chapters: Planning and Management, working with State DOTs, the Section 5311 Program, and the Tribal Transit Program.

Each section of the toolkit includes a comprehensive set of resources from FTA or other federal circulars and manuals, National RTAP resources, handbooks and toolkits developed by the Transit Cooperative Research Program, and many more. All are hyperlinked, so it just takes a click of the mouse to get access to these materials. The final section of the handbook compiles this list of resources into one chapter in case you are interested in just the links to additional information.

What are other sources of information for new managers in Kansas?

While the toolkit is extremely helpful for learning about managing a Section 5311 program, there are state-specific policies and procedures that you don’t want to forget about. Your best resource for those in Kansas is from the Kansas Department of Transportation Office of Public Transportation. Their website has copies of policies, checklists and other guidelines (http://ksdot.org/burTransPlan/pubtrans/index.asp), and their staff are available to provide additional information or clarification.
This link also provides a list of phone numbers and email addresses.

In addition to KDOT, Kansas RTAP is available to provide technical assistance, help you find information or materials related to the Section 5311 program, and to provide training. Just give us a call or visit our website at http://www.kstrtap.org.

Finally, your peers are a great resource for information about rural transit management, either from within your Coordinated Transit District or statewide. A complete contact list of agencies is available on the Kansas RTAP website http://www.kstransitdirectory.org. By clicking any county on the map, you are able to find service descriptions and phone numbers. The Kansas Public Transit Association is another organization of your peers that provides an annual conference and expo with a chance to share experiences (http://www.kstransit.org).

You’re not in this alone!

If you’re new to public transportation, or new to running a Section 5311 program, the important thing to know is that you are not in this alone. There are many resources available, and the new toolkit helps organize these resources around some of the most important topics. Take a look.

A Quick Reminder About KDOT Advertising Requirements for Section 5311 Agencies

By Clifton Hall

As a rural transit provider, you are probably familiar with KDOT’s requirements for advertising. Advertising, along with other forms of public relations and marketing, such as those mentioned in our January 2007 newsletter article “Agency Marketing on a Dime,” help your service reach out to the maximum number of interested people, making the most out of the funding provided to your service. This article will review the basic requirements of Section 5311 transit providers to advertise their service locally, as well as policies for advertising on the outside of vehicles.

Where advertisements must be placed

Advertisement for your public transportation services is required by the Federal Transit Administration as part of your participation in Section 5311 (United States Code 49-5311) funding, and is an allowable expense under your operating grant. KDOT specifically requires advertising in a local newspaper that is in circulation throughout your service area, and read by the general public. Your advertisement cannot be placed only in a senior citizens’ newsletter or in the senior citizens’ section of the local newspaper, or any other targeted-demographic publication. All ads must be placed in general advertising space, not the classified ad section of the newspaper. This ensures your advertisements reach the general public (pursuant to Section 5311 requirements), not a specific audience alone.

You must also run ads in the local or regional yellow pages phone book under the “Transportation Service Providers” category, making sure General Public Transportation is specified.

How advertisements must be formatted

All advertisements placed in newspapers must be block ads at least 2 inches x 3 inches to be compliant with KDOT’s standards. The ad must also contain language emphasizing that the system operates for the general public, is “first come, first serve,” and does not give priority or special designation for certain trip-types or demographic groups. Advertisements must also include a variation of the phrase “This project funded in part by the KDOT Public Transportation Group,” so that readers are made aware the service is publicly funded. See page 8 for examples of compliant wording in ads.

How to document design compliance and provide proof of advertisement

Along with placing regular monthly advertising in your local paper, KDOT requires you to retain copies of placed ads at your agency and to send hard copies to KDOT as proof of advertising. Compliant ads must be submitted to KDOT annually, due June 15 and November 15 each year. The November 15 submission should be sent along with your annual grant application. Valid proof of advertising includes 1) a photocopy or clipping of the placed ad, and 2) a tear sheet or copy of a bill confirming.

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KDOT advertising  Continued from page 7

publication, both mailed to KDOT. If your ad runs in several publications, only one valid placement is required to be sent to KDOT as confirmation during each semiannual period.

If you do not submit proof of advertising, KDOT may forfeit all of your operating reimbursements until you do so. If you are late or fail to comply, KDOT will send a letter requesting your information for compliance, after which you will be given 14 days to follow the requirements. Your response must be in writing and include the materials necessary for compliance.

Other forms of advertising

While other advertising is not required by KDOT, expanding your marketing through advertising is an effective way to broaden your message and the availability of your service. Other media you can advertise through include:

- Brochures
- Posters
- Public service announcements
- Radio
- Cable TV local access channel
- Signs, billboards
- Give-aways such as pens, pencils, notepads, etc., printed with your agency’s information and logo
- Television.

If you do decide to expand to other media like these, be sure to have your effort pre-approved by KDOT to assure reimbursement, and follow all other guidelines for keeping records of proof-of-advertisement. Keeping proof of advertising, whether the advertising is required or optional, will protect you in case of an audit.

Advertising on the outside of vehicles

As a way of creating additional revenue for your operation, you can charge outside parties to advertise on the outside of your vehicle. This is allowed by KDOT, as long as the advertisements follow commercial speech standards and do not conflict with state or federal laws or regulations.

The formatting, content, specifications, arrangement, and pricing of the advertisement must be established in a legally-binding contract between the outside party and your operation.

A KDOT program consultant will approve your advertising proceeds before you can request the funds be used for operating expenses. The advertisement can then be placed on the vehicle’s exterior, so long as it does not interfere with legally-required labelling on the vehicle.

Be sure to include this revenue stream in your financial records and maintain a separate accounting report for submission to KDOT. Also, include a policy for vehicle exterior advertising in your transit service policies.

Comments and tips from KDOT’s advertising manager

Scott Lein, who manages public transit advertising for KDOT, said most providers have no problem meeting minimum advertising requirements.

“If they do not submit proof of advertising, they do not receive funding; our providers understand this, so no program has really failed to meet requirements,” he said.

Lein said that while some minimum advertising is required, additional advertising is an often-overlooked tool for providers. “We’ve had a few providers really get creative, placing their logo and information on advertising space in local tourism maps and promotional materials,” he said. Lein said it’s a good idea to advertise on the outside or inside of buses, as this is a simple way to generate additional operating revenue, but, to his knowledge, no providers have taken advantage of the possibility so far.

Another topic for which Lein gave advice was planning events or purchasing promotional materials. He said to be sure to check with KDOT to make sure associated expenses are reimbursable before budgeting for the promotion.

“We had one provider organize a community barbecue, which was a great
idea and very successful, but the agency had to eat a large portion of the costs unexpectedly because food is not a reimbursable expense, Lein said. “When in doubt, just call or email KDOT to confirm your plans before committing to your budget.”

In sum
While advertising may just seem like another compliance issue for receiving funding for operations, it is put in place by the FTA and KDOT to help maximize the reach of your transit service. Advertising can increase your ridership through the amount of revenue you receive from fare-box recovery and proceeds from advertising on the exterior of vehicles. Plus, for many transit agencies, advertising is a KDOT-reimbursable expense.

Think about how your community’s citizens receive information on services available to them, and advertise with those sources to maximize the exposure of your service!

For more information, visit KDOT’s transit program website at https://www.ksdot.org/BurTransPlan/pubtrans/index.asp or simply search for “KDOT public transit” online. If you have questions about KDOT’s advertising requirements or reimbursement policies, contact Scott Lein via email at slein@ksdot.org or phone at (785) 296-0963.

Sources

SAFETY

Developing a Transit Emergency Management Plan: Tips from the National Transit Institute

By Anne Lowder

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) seeks to increase safety and security for passengers and transit staff by having transit agencies establish risk management practices and safety training appropriate to the size of the transit operation and its management structure.

A best practice for managing risk and improving safety at your agency is developing a Transit Emergency Management Plan. The process was described in a workshop held by the National Transit Institute, recently hosted by Kansas RTAP in Salina, Kansas. This article will provide an overview of some of the key points in the NTI course.

Why plan for an emergency?
The first reason for planning for an emergency is to reduce the possibility for injuries and save lives. Other reasons for planning for emergencies are to minimize property and environmental damage, decrease transit delays, and ensure or improve communication and coordination with your community’s incident management process.

All-hazards approach to emergency management
NTI recommends an “all-hazards” approach to emergency management, which recognizes that all emergencies have commonalities where the same processes (and people) should be called upon to respond to the emergency, regardless of the size or complexity of the emergency. This creates consistency and predictability in responding. Drivers, dispatchers, and management should have clearly defined response roles, and be well-trained for those roles. Management should not step in to take over others’ jobs in the case of a major emergency.

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Emergency Management Plan

Emergency response—from start to finish

Consistency in responding is also gained by applying the four tasks that comprise the Emergency Management Cycle—**preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.** Together, these tasks can help a community plan in advance for emergency response, respond effectively when needed, recover, and learn from the experience.

**Preparedness** involves planning, coordinating, training and evaluating. In an emergency situation affecting your community, have you determined how you will work with other agencies or entities? Transit agencies oftentimes need to make themselves noticed by emergency responders. It is a good practice to develop a memorandum of understanding with various government agencies or other community organizations like the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), the police, sheriff and other first responders. Be proactive and to reach out to let these entities know what support functions you can provide in an emergency.

For instance, if your community experiences a flood, would your county emergency management department call you to provide transportation for evacuation? When that call comes, have you worked out a memorandum of understanding with that agency? Preparedness is seeking out leaders of those organizations with whom to collaborate during an emergency, and having written agreements in place.

Training your employees and conducting drills helps employees understand what is needed of them and how policies and procedures are followed. Your operators are front line employees and each of them needs to consistently respond to an emergency in accordance with your agency training. The best approach to evaluate that your employees are trained appropriately is to have drills and practice emergency scenarios. Weaknesses can then be evaluated and training done to improve emergency response before a disaster occurs.

**Response** is putting into action your preparedness plan. Preparedness planning and training would have set up proper communication channels to the public, drivers trained in different routes and proper contacts made between different entities such as public works and local county or city officials. Whether the situation is re-routing buses or public evacuation efforts, the response follows the same preparedness planning.

**Recovery.** Recovery includes restoring your service and, then, improving your system based on the lessons learned from the emergency. In the situation of re-routing your buses, did your customers get the message about the altered routes? If not, what improvements can be made to get the message out to the right people? Did coordination work with other organizations, or is more communication needed? How did your employees handle the situation? Does more training need to occur?

**Mitigation.** The Federal Emergency Management Agency identifies mitigation as taking action now to reduce “human and financial consequences” during and after a disaster. As you develop your Emergency Management Plan you identify probable emergencies that might or will occur in your area. This is called the vulnerability and hazard analysis. Basically, this is a list of possible emergencies that could happen that are analyzed and prioritized from highly likely to less likely. For instance, what is your probability of a severe weather occurrence compared to the possibility of terrorist activity?

After an emergency you “mitigate” your Emergency Management Plan by asking questions during the recovery process such as how effective (or not) was communication or training? By identifying the weak links that were uncovered during the emergency, you can tweak your preparedness plan.

What needs to go into your emergency plan?

An emergency plan details how your agency will respond to an emergency. There are six components of a transit emergency management plan.

1) **Guidelines.** Guidelines include written policies addressing the life and safety of your passengers and employees. Also, included is your analysis on your vulnerability and hazards and written emergency response procedures that incorporate an all-hazards approach to emergencies. Another item under guidelines is to have written procedures on internal and external agency communication.

2) **Transit agency emergency management overview.** This overview should define your transit agency and the jurisdiction or area that you serve. It should include...
procedures for carrying out emergencies, a list of potential emergencies, the process of how you would respond to these emergencies, internal and external notification, on-scene coordination, restoration of service, on-scene investigation, debriefing on lessons learned, and reports.

3) Transit emergency response. Your agency should have standard operating procedures that define the roles of each employee in the transit agency and include items such as an operator's rule book and guide, policies, and employee roles during an emergency situation. For instance the general manager should be responsible for making sure that resources are made available so other employees can do their jobs. Dispatch might be responsible for assigning vehicles and routes and notifying family members of affected passengers and staff. Maintenance might maintain an inventory of vehicles and equipment that could be used during an emergency. Detailing and defining each employee's role steers that employee to proper training to handle any type of emergency that could occur.

4) Transit support for community emergencies. Transit is an important asset to communities that is often overlooked until needed. In your emergency plan, it is important that you coordinate assistance responsibilities and needs with other agencies, departments and organizations within your community. You need to know what they might want from you and you need to let them know what you are able to provide to the response effort in event of an emergency.

5) Emergency management training. If you haven't been trained to handle an emergency, when that emergency happens, things might not go well. A successful Transit Emergency Management Plan will only be as good as the training you put into it. An emergency may arise and nobody will know what to do because they have not practiced. Use tabletop simulation exercises, full scale emergency drills and public safety agency training. Each staff member should be familiar with your agency policies, procedures, equipment and facilities for a successful outcome during an emergency.

6) Plan management. The plan must be reviewed, tested and checked annually for adequacy, feasibility, completeness and compliance.

Parting thoughts
Chances are good your agency will need to respond to an emergency. The emergency might be minor or it might be catastrophic. Either way, a written Emergency Management Plan creates the framework for communicating externally with other agencies and for how your agency will prepare and respond internally.

It is important to remember that transit emergency management is not “one-size-fits-all,” because transit agencies come in all shapes and sizes. Where your agency is located, the size of your service area, number of employees, and types of possible emergencies in your service area (tornadoes, floods, crashes involving hazardous materials, to name a few) will affect what goes into your Plan.

In sum, an Emergency Management Plan is an essential tool for your agency to reduce loss of life and property through working with other responding agencies. It builds consistency into your preparedness process and helps make your agency a trusted partner in emergency response.

The Emergency Management Cycle, Put Into Practice
by Anne Lowder, Kansas RTAP trainer

Here’s a simple scenario for an emergency situation and what the emergency management cycle would look like for it.

Scenario: Someone falls on your vehicle This could be a serious fall or a minor trip. The cycle is the same, although the particular steps will vary based on the incident.

Preparedness: Your agency should have a policy that spells out how to handle a fall on a transit vehicle, and all your drivers should be trained in implementing the policy.

Response: The response follows the policy. What is your policy for handling that situation? Your driver will need to make a decision about whether to call 911. If the person who fell gets up on her own, calling 911 is not needed. If she cannot get up on her own, your policy might require the driver to call 911 rather than try to help the her up and risk further injury. In either situation, the driver must complete an incident report.

Recovery: Recovery would involve reviewing the incident report and following through with anything related to the person's injuries, if sustained in the fall.

Mitigation: After reviewing the driver's response to the situation, you may find that your policy is working well. If not, the policy should be changed. If the policy is sound but it was not followed, re-training for the driver might be required, or disciplinary action. Mitigation might also involve fixing the floor surface if it contributed to the fall.

Policies are key to consistent emergency response, and it is important that your drivers know them and follow them. In RTAP training, when we discuss what should be done in response to an emergency, some drivers will say “Well, this is what I would do...” But they should be saying “I do what my agency policy says to do.”

Sources
The Rural National Transit Database (RNTD) is a program managed by the FTA to record and monitor performance data of all Section 5311 transit providers. This data is made available to the public in Excel format for each year from 2006 through 2012 (as of print.)

Transit agencies can use this data to review other providers’ or their own performance and reporting. However, because of the way it is formatted, using this data to produce year-to-year reports, or to compare performance between providers, can be daunting for novice spreadsheet users and still labor intensive for more experienced users.

To solve this problem, researchers at Florida International University, with support from National RTAP, created a web-based database tool to make using and analyzing this data less time-consuming and more user-friendly. This article will introduce you to this system, called INTDAS, and outline the problems it can solve. We will give you a brief walk-through of some of its features and capabilities that can assist your operation’s planning and performance analysis.

**How INTDAS makes navigating RNTD easier**

Using INTDAS can save you time—lots of it. Albert Gan, INTDAS administrator and one of its creators, says: “It may take hours to identify and retrieve the data from the annual raw data files released by FTA. In INTDAS, this can be done in minutes, if not seconds.”

Gan said INTDAS was born out of necessity, and was originally a system created to work with the urban National Transit Database. It was released on CD-ROM in 2001. Gan and researchers at Florida International University were approached by National RTAP to develop a rural version in 2014, which launched in January 2015.

Gan and his colleagues had approached Florida’s DOT to launch a web version of the INTDAS in 2007, which eventually including a peer selection feature (currently only available on urban INTDAS) that automatically selects peer systems for analysis and comparison. Gan hopes an equivalent feature will be available on Rural INTDAS in the near future, which would eliminate some of the guesswork from peer comparison analysis.

INTDAS provides easy access to each variable for each provider that receives FTA funding. This includes metrics such as vehicle-miles, ridership, revenue-hours, etc. These metrics can be used to create custom reports about the performance characteristics that interest you the most, allowing you to view how performance has changed over time, or how it compares between providers in a given year. The system also allows you to view directly the forms each provider filled out to report their data to FTA.

Using built-in tools, you can use INTDAS to see how your operation has changed over a period of years. This type of analysis would require copious duplication in Excel, and would be prone to error without hours of debugging.

The peer comparison tool of INTDAS lets you see how your operation compares to similar providers. You can also see how your peers’ service profiles have changed over the years, to posit how your transit operation might change in the future.

Now, we will take a look at how INTDAS helps you to easily report and analyze data.

**How to use INTDAS**

INTDAS is available at the Florida Transit Information System website, and can be easily found by doing a web search for “INTDAS,” or visiting the link in the Sources for this article. The main webpage gives you an overview of the system’s background and capabilities, which will be helpful to read before using the system.
To access the web version of the system, click on the button that says “Enter INTDAS Web Version” in the upper left sidebar of the main page. This will take you to a login screen; the first time you visit the site, you will have to request access by clicking the “Access Request Form” hyperlink. Clicking this will take you to a disclosure agreement and then to a registration form where you enter your business and professional information. After registering, you will receive an email with your unique system-generated password giving you full access to the system.

At the login page, select the “Rural INTDAS” bubble and enter the password to gain access. Once inside the system, you’ll see a box in the upper-left hand corner containing all primary recipients of FTA Section 5311 funds, which are mainly state transportation agencies. There are also filters above this box for years of available data and for states and Indian tribes.

If you select Kansas Department of Transportation, the box below it will populate with all transit agencies receiving funding from KDOT. You can choose your own system by clicking on the lower left hand box, or you can select multiple systems by holding the control key while clicking and/or a consecutive range of providers by holding the

**continued on next page**

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**Sources**

- Gan, Albert. E-mail Interview, April 11, 2015.

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**Data from the Rural NTD** is readily available for download from the National RTAP Resource Library (http://www.nationalrtap.org/Resource-Library). Search for “Rural NTD” at the Library webpage. This allows you to download all RNTD data from 2006 through 2012 in Microsoft Excel format, if you would like it in Excel for your own use.
INTDAS  Continued from page 13

shift key while clicking. The “Selected Subrecipients” group holds your selected providers, and you can save any group or individual provider by hitting the “Save” button above the lower-right box and naming your group, which will appear in the box in the upper-right hand corner.

Once you’ve selected providers, you have three options. The first is “View NTD Forms,” which gives you direct access to the information given to FTA as a part of reporting requirements for that provider.

The next is “View Standard Reports,” which gives you either a history of the provider’s statistics over the years, or a comparison of that provider to other providers in the group.

The third is “Select Variables,” which allows you to create your own tables to compare among providers in a given group.

Once you have tabulated data in INTDAS, it can be exported for use in reports, memos, or for further analysis.

Conclusion

If you are looking for an easy way to access and create simple reports of rural transit data, look no further than INTDAS. Using this service saves you valuable time that would be spent downloading, joining, and manipulating data in Excel or other spreadsheet software. By exploring the capabilities of INTDAS, you can easily broaden the capabilities of your transit service to plan and monitor performance.

For more information on INTDAS and its functions, visit http://www.ftis.org/intdas.html or web search “INTDAS” and click on “INTDAS Tutorials.” A suite of video tutorials are accessible by clicking the button below the “Enter Web Version” on the main page left sidebar, or the “View Tutorials” button in the lower-left hand corner, if you are already logged in. Enjoy exploring!

Attention drivers: New this year, the Kansas Transit Bus Roadeo is all about you! Besides being a great opportunity to show off your driving skills in a safe training environment, it is also a day of appreciation for what you do.

The Roadeo competition showcases good driving skills, and you will have the opportunity to meet and learn from others. Plus, prizes will be awarded to the top three winners!

The vehicles used in this competition will be 20-passenger, body-on-chassis, and wheelchair lift-equipped. Drivers will be scored on navigating through an obstacle course of orange road cones within a time limit, testing various real-life driving scenarios such as smooth parallel parking and precision backing, plus pre-trip inspection and excellent customer service during wheelchair securement.


To learn more and register, go to: https://www2.ku.edu/~kutc/pdffiles/15%20RTAP%20KS%20Transit%20Bus%20Roadeo.pdf
CONFERENCES

July 6–9, 2015
SWTA Transit Law Seminar & Procurement Workshop, Oklahoma City, OK

August 3–5, 2015
Kansas Public Transit Association (KPTA) Annual Conference, Manhattan, KS.
http://kstransit.org/ -- (See information on pre-conference Transit Roadeo on page 14.)

September 14–15, 2015
SWTA Transit Marketing Workshop & Spotlight Awards, Breckenridge, CO
http://www.swta.org/news_events/details/swta-transit-marketing-workshop

October 11–13, 2015
National Transit Institute Transit Trainers’ Workshop, New Orleans, LA
http://ntionline.com/courses/courseinfo.php?id=176

October 27–30, 2015
National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference: Reaching New Heights in Rural and Tribal Transit, Denver, CO
http://webbuilder.nationalrtap.org/conference2015/Home.aspx

RESOURCES


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The purposes of the RTAP program are to: 1) educate transit operators about the latest technologies in rural and specialized transit; 2) encourage their translation into practical application; and 3) to share information among operators.

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