The word “rodeo” brings to mind horses and saddles, barrels and cowboys (or cowgirls). But a roadeo is something else, and the First Annual Kansas Transit Roadeo, held in Manhattan on August 2, 2015 demonstrated to Kansas transit managers and drivers some of those differences. While a transit roadeo, like the traditional rodeo, has a goal of showing off technical skills (in this case, driving) it also provides the opportunity to demonstrate just how safe, knowledgeable, and customer-friendly transit drivers really are when it comes to providing transportation to Kansas passengers.

The Roadeo was co-sponsored by KPTA and Kansas RTAP, and hosted by Flint Hills ATA. Each contestant completed a written

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The Missing Link: Transportation’s Role in Health Care

By Caitlin Zibers

About 3.6 million Americans miss or delay medical appointments every year because they lack a ride to the doctor,” according to Therese McMillan, Acting Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Additionally, estimates from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation show nearly half the population in the United States lives with a chronic condition, and with an aging population it is reasonable to expect increases in need—not only in the level of care but access to care. Is connecting your riders to their healthcare providers an ever-increasing challenge? The message we hear from Kansas transit providers often is that the challenges are growing in terms of longer-distance trips to health care facilities and more people needing dialysis and other specialty care. Is there a plan for providing access to the increasing number of seniors and others with health challenges in your community? This article describes the Federal Transit Administration’s new Rides to Wellness initiative, highlights key

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Roadeo Continued from page 1

test, demonstrated a pre-trip inspection and wheelchair securement, and then drove an obstacle course with vehicles provided by ATA.

Testing driving skills

The roadeo was held on a Sunday at Kansas State University’s football stadium using buses that weighed 14,500 pounds and were 22 feet long x 8 feet wide. The event, which is modeled after the Community Transportation Association (CTAA) National Community Transportation Roadeo, gave drivers an opportunity to show off their driving abilities by testing their skills through nine obstacles that began with a right turn into a serpentine obstacle course marked by cones. Reco Clark, a roadeo volunteer, judge, and designated videographer, said this about the serpentine course: “This looks like it was a tough obstacle since many drivers missed the swerve cone and had to reverse to complete the obstacle.”

Other obstacles included a series of sharper 90-degree turns, reverse maneuvers, and dual clearance maneuvers in which obstacles become increasingly narrow as the driver passes through them. There was also a simulated passenger stop. The course ended with a short and quick stop, which required the bus to be going 20 miles per hour at a minimum before stopping within 6 inches of the cone.

Drivers maneuvered around orange cones and between ever-narrowing lanes delineated by tennis balls and traffic barrels. Without practicing before the competition, some drivers hit cones and sent tennis balls bouncing. Renee Bishop of OCCK, Inc. was the first driver out on the obstacle course and commented at the finish line: “This is harder than it looks.”

It is normal to hit a few cones, and no driver has ever made a perfect run, said B.J. Garcia, Sr. Manager of Transportation, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA) and the event lead host. “The course is really tight,” he said.

While the driving challenges were many, the mood of the event was light-hearted. Tom Rodman, bus operations instructor for KCATA and the event’s Emcee/announcer/course builder, joked: “It’s been a tough day for the cones!” right before blowing his horn and announcing the next driver, similar to how the emcee for Ringling Brothers would announce the next show.

Not to forget: Wheelchair securement, pre-trip inspection, and the written test

Drivers could accumulate a total of 1,000 points: 525 points (52.5 percent) for driving, 200 points (20.0 percent) for wheelchair securement, 150 points (15.0 percent) for pre-trip inspection and 125 points (12.5 percent) for the written test. Points were deducted for numerous reasons, including touching a cone, reversing when not required in an obstacle course, or going over the seven-minute time limit. Drivers were also judged on safety factors, such as seat belt use, smooth operation, and customer service during the wheelchair securement.

Wheelchair securement. The wheelchair securement track of the roadeo is a seven minute competition where the contestant must greet the passenger in the same manner that any other passenger would be greeted who is boarding the bus. The contestant must then verbalize to the passenger the process and steps he or she is taking during securement. The goal is for the passenger to always be at ease and feel confident with the process. Contestants are scored on sensitivity and awareness, loading the platform, raising the lift and securement of the wheelchair and passenger.

Anne Smith, Flint Hills ATA director and wheelchair securement judge, noted that many drivers struggled with the wheelchair securement track as well as the customer service component, and noted that their
The START training program. The START training program is designed to cover three elements that provide the foundation of knowledge needed for a transit driver: 1) vehicle inspections, 2) driving defensively, and 3) passenger assistance and safety.

The winners are…

Renee Bishop took first place and received a $150 prize. Bishop has been an OCCK, Inc. paratransit bus driver for nine years. This was her first competition. About the roadeo, she said, “I was very impressed. It was really well organized. It was a very good learning experience and lots of fun.”

Debbie Atkinson, Director of OCCK, Inc. said, “I am proud of Renee. She is a very conscientious driver. We have an excellent training program at OCCK. Safety is our number one priority and we spend a lot of time training our drivers. The bus roadeo is good for all of the drivers’ morale to have drivers from various transportation companies get together and have fun in a competition such as this. The drivers all enjoyed themselves and are looking forward to competing in next year’s bus roadeo.”

Wendi Vittitow took second place and received a $100 prize. Vittitow is transportation coordinator with Butler County Transportation and has been a paratransit bus driver for three years. Vittitow said, “I was nervous at first, thinking ‘What am I doing here?’, but after completing the roadeo and finishing in 2nd place, it was a proud moment for me. I never figured I would finish that well, having experiences at the roadeo mirror everyday challenges as a driver.

“The constant pressure to remain on schedule can take its toll on drivers, and the temptation do develop “short cuts” in order to save time is always something that drivers and administrative staff must guard against,” she said. Smith went on to say: “Safety can never be compromised for the sake of the schedule. This is where regular training opportunities like the transit roadeo can play such a critical role.”

Pre-trip inspection.

Another part of the competition included drivers inspecting a bus in seven minutes for four safety defects, which were pre-set by Mike Bohl, maintenance coordinator, Flint Hills ATA. Bohl announced his safety defects during the awards ceremony to many “Ohs!” from the drivers. The four pre-set safety defects: 1) suspicious package, 2) one windshield wiper off, 3) a front lug nut off and 4) non-working right-side turn-signal.

Written test

The written test included 30 multiple choice questions. Questions for the test were taken from the National RTAP

Thanks to the Roadeo Planning Committee

Anne Smith, director, Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency
Diane Lindsey, administrative assistant, Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency
Kevin Riley, operations manager, Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency
Diane Lindsey, office manager, Flint Hills Area Transportation Agency
B.J. Garcia, Sr. manager of transportation, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority
Tom Rodman, bus operations instructor, Kansas City Area Transportation Authority
Robert (Bob) Nugent, director, Lawrence Transit
Connie Spencer, executive director, East Topeka Senior Center
Pat Weaver, program manager, Kansas Rural Transit Assistance Program
Anne Lowder, outreach coordinator, Kansas Rural Transit Assistance Program
If Your Drivers Want to Practice Before Next Year’s Roadeo...

Does setting up a complete bus roadeo obstacle course seem overwhelming? If yes, start small, with the pre-trip and wheelchair securement events. The prep for either of these events is minimal. Becoming expert in these two events, though, is a huge help for overall scoring.

Choose four basic defects for the competitors to locate during the pre-trip inspection, such as the four Mike Bohl chose for the roadeo (listed above). The National Community Transportation Roadeo Guide (see sources) makes scoring logical and easy to follow. Basically, in 7 minutes the competitor needs to find the four defects. Many other defects might be located but only the pre-determined four defects count.

Wheelchair securement (20% of the total score) is often an under-appreciated event by the competitors, but the customer service aspect of this event often trips up the best.

When you are ready to move on to setting up the driving obstacles, you can make it easier by just choosing one or two roadeo obstacle events to set up. The obstacle courses with the most cones (37 for each) are the Left and Right Hand Reverse. The obstacle course with fewest cones is the Passenger Stop with just two.

To set up the Serpentine obstacle course, refer to the National Community Transportation Roadeo Guide’s diagram and instructions. You will need is a 100-ft tape measure and 11 cones.

**Step one:** Measure the bus. Length and width.

**Step two:** Set the first two cones for part A (see the diagram). (The distance between the two cones is the width of the vehicle plus 6 inches). If the width of your vehicle is 8 feet, the distance between the two cones is 8 feet and 6 inches.

**Step three:** Refer to Part B on the diagram. The measurement of the length of B on the diagram is the length of the vehicle. If the vehicle is 22 feet in length, the distance from cone A to the last cone for B will be the distance of 22 feet. Evenly-space these cones on an angle so that the last one is half the distance of “A” on the vertical axis, or in this case, 4 feet 3 inches.

**Step four:** The distance between the last cone of B to the turn radius cone of C is the length and half of the vehicle or 22 feet plus 11 feet in this case, for a total of 33 feet. This measurement is the same for both sides of the turn radius cone.

**Step five:** Repeat step three, making a mirror image of Part B.

**Step six:** Repeat Step two, making a mirror image of Part A.

The Serpentine obstacle is now ready for a trial run. The placement of the turn radius cone may need to be adjusted due to the turning radius of the vehicle.

Once completed, drivers can practice on the obstacle course several times, until comfortable. Then re-set the cones for another obstacle event.

If you want to go all-out in preparing for roadeo competition, set up the complete obstacle course and have a friendly competition with a neighboring agency!

Good luck and see you next year at the 2nd Annual Kansas Transit Roadeo. Date, time and location to be announced in a future Kansas TransReporter.
never competing in anything like this before. It was a great and fun experience, and I believe everyone should try it.”

Michael Ott took third place and received a $50 prize. Ott is a bus driver for Flint Hills ATA and has been a driver for three years. “The event was an excellent opportunity for drivers from other agencies to come together to exchange ideas, hone their skills, and enjoy each other’s camaraderie. The driving portion was the most challenging,” Ott said.

In Sum

The First Annual Kansas Transit Roadeo was a success. Bob Nugent, Director of Lawrence Transit, a member of the Roadeo Planning Committee, and judge for the Passenger Stop event summed it up well: “The event is for the employees who want to bring their families and show them what they do on a regular basis. And while drivers often get nervous while competing, the competition is laid back in nature and for bragging rights. They have fun more than they stress.”

The Roadeo is for celebrating our transit drivers. It is a hands-on training event that acknowledges the skill set and camaraderie of drivers across Kansas.

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Rides to Wellness  Continued from page 1

points from a recent summit, and profiles some of this year’s funded projects under that initiative that may suggest some solutions in your community.

What exactly is the Rides to Wellness initiative?

The Rides to Wellness initiative stems from DOT Secretary Foxx’s Ladders of Opportunity, an initiative designed by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to provide connections between communities and essential services. The Ladders of Opportunity initiative is focused on connecting people to economic opportunities such as jobs, education, and essential community services such as health care in a reliable and affordable way. The driving idea behind the initiative, as stated by Secretary Foxx, is that “Through transportation, we can help ensure that the rungs on the ladder of opportunity aren’t so far apart—and that the American dream is still within reach for those who are willing to work for it.” (Ladders of Opportunity)

Three goals for improving health care access

Through this broader initiative, Rides to Wellness was created to serve the goal of linking communities to essential health services. Its vision: “through rides, people and community health thrive.” To support this vision, three goals have been identified for the initiative: 1) increase access to care, 2) improve health outcomes, and 3) reduce health care costs. Increasing access to care is perhaps the most visible outcome, and will accomplished by providing transit opportunities and routes for patients. As communication between transportation agencies improves, overlapping services and gaps in service can be better identified, increasing the efficiency of local transit systems.

In Kansas, improved communication to reduce gaps in service is being tackled with the development of regionalized services and the move towards one-touch, one-call centers. Better access to health care, along with other essential destinations such as jobs, is a driving force behind regionalizing transportation services in Kansas—identified as one of four goals in the regional transit implementation plan (KDOT, 2014).
Many communities, however, overlook the role transportation can have in increasing health outcomes and reducing health care costs. Health outcomes are a wide range of measures to determine a population’s overall health, a few of which are: health-related quality of life, life expectancy, disability and disease. Transit services can contribute to improving these outcomes by incorporating multi-modal designs into the transit system, encouraging riders to be more active while connecting them with the preventative services that can identify potential health problems before they advance.

In addition to linking riders with preventative services, transit can also provide access to treatment of chronic illnesses that need regular attention, such as diabetes. By delivering riders to appointments for routine treatments and check-ups, the health care costs incurred from advanced illnesses can be reduced.

The Rides to Wellness initiative has a three-pronged strategy, beginning with building commitment and partnerships to identify and promote promising practices in healthcare transportation. Recognizing that several agencies play a role in providing local transportation services, this first step is essential to increase efficiency. The second strategy is to drive change with a healthcare transportation summit, which was held this spring and included a diverse group of agencies and stakeholders. Lastly, the initiative will stimulate investment through community grants to link healthcare and transportation, with 16 grants awarded for the year 2015.

Rides to Wellness Summit: Driving change

The national Rides to Wellness Summit, held in March 2015, brought together 100 professionals from the healthcare and transportation fields to discuss interagency cooperation and areas of opportunity. The purpose of the summit was to identify areas for possible collaboration to overcome the transportation barriers within the healthcare system. Among the speakers were representatives from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Health and Human Services (HHS), and the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM).

The speakers highlighted ways in which transportation can influence a community’s health. Audrey Rowe, Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service for USDA, spoke about the transportation problems surrounding food access for children.

Kathy Greenlee, former Secretary of Health for Kansas, now working with Health and Human Services (HHS), stressed the importance of transporting seniors and people with disabilities. Greenlee also highlighted alternative sources of health such as grocery stores and churches as a way to enhance community living for all citizens. She emphasized the growing need for senior transportation stating, “...10,000 people will turn 65, every day for the next 17 years in this country. This is an issue we can’t avoid” (Greenlee).

Over the next 17 years transportation systems will feel the strain of our aging population, underlining the need to strengthen the link between healthcare and transportation now, before our transportation systems are at full capacity.

Putting Rides to Wellness into action: Planning grants awarded

Carolyn Jeskey, co-director of the National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM), addressed these issues in a recent interview, describing the summit as an opportunity for cross-organizational collaboration. Taking the brainstorming from the summit a step further, as part of the Rides to Wellness initiative, the NCMM has administered 16 competitive planning grants to communities throughout the country, focusing on three main areas within healthcare: 1) transportation to post-hospitalization appointments, 2) primary and preventative care, and 3) behavioral health appointments.

The grant recipients will have six months to develop and test solutions focused on one of these three areas (“16 Communities Receive Grants” pg. 1).

Jeskey went on to describe the long term benefits of these programs, stating: “One, it’s the learning that we’re going to get out of the 16 [grant recipients]. What they’re doing is testing proposed projects and vetting them in the community before launching them... We want to be able to share the learning, share the process, and share what the hurdles were for these communities and how they overcame them.”

Jeskey ended with describing how those lessons will be shared through webinars, conference presentations and podcasts.

While she acknowledged funding can be a significant barrier in increasing access to health care and healthy activities for many communities who did not receive a grant, she encourages communities to begin by “reaching out and having those conversations with patients and seeing what their needs are... and then say: ‘So what can we do together?’ ” (Jeskey, 2015).
Three “Rides to Wellness” examples

To help learn a little more about the projects funded under this round of planning grants, we took a closer look at three of the projects:

**Missouri Rural Health Association.** This project covers nine rural counties in South Central Missouri and will focus on access to preventative and primary care. Two concepts have been proposed: the first being a train-the-trainer curriculum for volunteers from the hospital auxiliary, senior center, and other service agencies. The idea behind the curriculum is to train volunteers so that they can educate their own agencies in how to access HealthTran and other transportation services. The second concept involves a “healthcare provider subscription service to transportation” (“Healthcare Access Mobility Design Challenge” 25-26).

**Mercy Medical Center.** Covering nine counties in central Iowa, this project focuses on access to post-hospitalization services to decrease the need for hospital readmission. The first concept proposed is a “rider’s club” for patients being discharged from the hospital. They will be directed to the mobility coordinator to help connect them to transportation options. Second, this project plans to focus on volunteer transportation, with Mercy’s Volunteer Services Department taking the lead in recruiting, screening, interviewing and conducting background checks on drivers. (“Healthcare Access Mobility Design Challenge” 45-46).

**Interfaith Senior Programs, Inc.** This project, based in Waukesha, Wisconsin, focuses on access to preventative and primary care. The two concepts proposed are a one call center/central dispatch and travel training. The one call center/central dispatch will consist of one number that would allow the caller to schedule a ride and receive eligibility screenings and administer the application. Additionally, travel training would produce a two pronged navigation program. Trained volunteers would accompany seniors and people with disabilities to help them learn to use the fixed-route bus service as well as assist individuals in creating an individualized transportation plan (“Healthcare Access Mobility Design Challenge” 33-34).

Over the next six months of project development, the main goal is to hone these solutions and figure out how the services will be most effective, according to Margaux Shields, mobility manager for Interfaith Senior Programs. The keys to success include involving a wide variety of stakeholders such as “the aging and disability resource center, local regional planning commission, 211 operators, the metro bus transit of Waukesha, members from the planning and development commission, riders, and two of the three major health care systems,” says Shields. Additionally, she believes getting community leaders on board with this project “so that there is a willingness to fund it and see it as a useful endeavor and a priority” is essential for success of this project.

Shields’ advice to other communities continued on next page

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If you’re a Section 5311 or Section 5310 program manager, and particularly if you’re new to the agency, you may wonder what you really need to know about federal regulations for the program. A recent pre-conference workshop, sponsored by Kansas RTAP and hosted by the Kansas Public Transit Association on August 3, 2015, provided a day of in-depth training, to help understand compliance requirements for a host of federal regulations.

Rich Garrity, senior associate for RLS & Associates, a transportation operations and management consulting firm, was the instructor for the course. Garrity has served as RLS & Associates’ primary project manager on complex policy and management studies conducted on behalf of state departments of transportation. He has developed procedures and led compliance reviews of state DOT grantees in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and North Carolina to ensure that subgrantees meet all applicable Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements.

Garrity developed this course based on that extensive experience, recognizing that: 1) there have been significant changes over the last few years in the federal grant management requirements, and 2) many states, including Kansas, have had significant turnover in transit managers.

The day included discussion of the major regulatory requirements, including ADA, Charter, DBE, Drug and Alcohol, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), Title VI, Environmental Justice, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and Bloodborne Pathogens. The summaries presented in the course acquainted transit managers with the “what” of each regulation—what it entails. The steps for how to comply were explained and participants had the opportunity to ask specific questions. The overview included a discussion of the applicable FTA regulations, guidance, etc., for eight topics (see sidebar on next page) and where resources for those topics can be found (state documents, links to web sites or other relevant technical assistance resources).

FTA 101: What You Really Need to Know

By Pat Weaver

If you’re a Section 5311 or Section 5310 program manager, and particularly if you’re new to the agency, you may wonder what you really need to know about federal regulations for the program. A recent pre-conference workshop, sponsored by Kansas RTAP and hosted by the Kansas Public Transit Association on August 3, 2015, provided a day of in-depth training, to help understand compliance requirements for a host of federal regulations.

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Rides to Wellness Continued from page 7

interested in strengthening the link between transportation and healthcare is to reach out.

“We found that there’s been a real willingness and excitement among healthcare organizations to actually engage in working on transportation issues because they’ve realized it’s such an issue...literally just making that contact is crucial, and getting research from social workers, nurses and individuals who are helping patients with transportation. That front line research really helps determine what needs to be addressed.” (Shields)

Conclusion

As transportation continues to integrate with health systems, look for ways within your own community to initiate and support collaboration between the two networks. Populations are aging, and as a result we will continue to experience a higher demand for medical, social and behavioral services. An inclusive and innovative transportation network has the ability to act as the link, increasing access while decreasing healthcare costs. For inspiration, look at the results of the projects that have been funded, and tailor their techniques to your community. For a complete list of funded projects and to access the slides from the June 24 webinar, visit the National Center for Mobility Management’s website at http://nationalcenterformobilitymanagement.org/rides-to_wellness_home/.
Eight Modules Covered During Training

The notebook provided FTA 101 participants during the pre-conference training in Manhattan included eight modules:

- Eligible Services
- Financial Management
- Grants Management Principles (Post-Award)
- Procurement
- ADA
- Civil Rights
- Charter and School Bus
- Drug and Alcohol Testing

If you are a Kansas transit provider who was unable to attend the training, we can provide an electronic copy of the hand-out. Please contact Pat Weaver at weaver@ku.edu to request the notes.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA). It is important to review the requirements specific to FTA.

A final rule published on March 13, 2015 provided new guidance on applying the concept of reasonable accommodation to DOT-covered entities, which included new definitions and practice changes. According to the rule revision, transportation entities are required to make reasonable modifications/accommodations to policies, practices, and procedures to avoid discrimination and ensure that their programs are accessible to individuals with disabilities. The rule requires a designated person to coordinate efforts to comply with the regulation who is trained on the rule and who has authority to make key operational decisions, procedures for making a request for reasonable modification, and establishing a complaint procedure. For regular updates on FTA rules associated with ADA, including reasonable modification and other ADA regulation, visit http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12325.html.

Clarification of charter rules

Garrity provided a good overview of some of the charter rules that went into effect in 2008. In general, a transit system may provide charter service as long as the agency

continued on next page

Sources


- Policies for Public Transportation Program Grantees. Kansas Department of Transportation. Revised March 5, 2015.

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Here are some of the highlights of four of the topics covered during the training:

**Financial management**

Participants learned about the grant management requirements encompassed under the “OMB Super Circular” (2 CFR Part 200.500) which replaced previous cost principles, administrative requirements and audit circulars (e.g. A-87, A-102 and A-133 for local governments and A-122, A-110, and A-133 for nonprofit corporations).

**Procurement rules and Section 5311 agencies**

A number of reference documents are available to transit agencies to guide procurement practices. According to Garrity, one of the best for sample language for contracts for services is provided in FTAs Best Practices Procurement Manual (BPPM). Garrity said most 5311-funded agencies rarely get involved with procurement over the micro-purchases threshold of $3,000. However, the consequence for not following the procedures is to have the purchase disallowed for reimbursement, and the agency becomes liable for the entire cost. It is important to pay attention to those regulations. What about purchases like tires, for which individual purchases are less than $3,000, but the total purchase over the year is greater than $3,000? Garrity says that as long as it is your policy to purchase tires as needed, then the practice of buying tires throughout the year is acceptable. While it is possible that you might get a better price by buying several tires at once, in bulk, you can make the decision whether the cost of the bid process is worth the potential cost savings. For purchases greater than $3,000, however, quotes must be obtained.

**Service refusal and reasonable accommodation**

2015 was significant for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA discussion was a lively one, with many questions and clarifications around conditions of service refusal. Garrity also provided a review of the rule changes that came into being in late 2011, such as changes in definition of the common wheelchair along with definitions of “legitimate safety concerns.”

Service animal requirements were also reviewed. A key point was that some provisions outlined under the Department of Justice have not been adopted by the
complies with specific FTA reporting requirements. In some aspects, KDOT requirements for charter service are more restrictive than FTAs charter requirements. In addition to the information provided in FTA 101, be sure to check the KDOT web site for information specific to charter service at http://ksdot.org/burTransPlan/pubtrans/index.asp.

Conclusion

KDOT provides grants management guidance to transit managers in their application package and in their policy manual Policies for Public Transportation Program Grantees. KDOT policies are developed in the context of federal requirements associated with financial and program management established by the Federal government. The guidance provided in Garrity’s training helped to summarize these requirements in a single reference document. If you are a Kansas Section 5311 or 5310 provider and were unable to attend this session, please contact Pat Weaver at weaver@ku.edu to request an electronic version of the handout document. Remember to verify policies outlined in Garrity’s handout with your KDOT program consultant for clarification if it appears contrary to KDOTs policy manual (see the link to KDOTs policy manual in the Sources provided for this article on page 9).

**SAFETY**

**Safety Precautions For Operating a Lift**

*Tips to keep in mind when using a wheelchair on a lift.*

- Deploying the lift when vehicle is on sloped ground is hazardous. Operate the lift with the vehicle parked on level ground.
- The vehicle must be safely parked with parking brake ON before using lift.
- Verify that the front roll stop is up before raising or lowering platform.
- Be certain the wheelchair fits safely on the platform and does not extend over the platform edges or interfere with operation of the roll stop.
- Do not allow arms, legs, or clothing near moving parts.
- The lift is designed to transport ONE wheelchair and its occupant, or a single standee. Do not overload it.
- Do not stand in front of the lift while deploying platform.
- Keep others clear while operating the lift.
- Do not allow an untrained person to operate the lift.
- Do not allow anyone to stand or walk on the bridge plate when it is unsupported. A bent bridge plate can cause interference with the platform as its rises or lowers.
- Lock wheelchair brakes before the lift is operated. Powered wheelchairs should have the power turned off, which will set the brake.
- Use extreme care in wet conditions. Wheelchair brakes are less effective if the platform or wheels are wet.
- Never leave the platform extended outside of the vehicle. Always return the platform to its stowed position after use.

A number of useful tools developed by the U.S. Census Bureau and their partners over the past 10 years provides greater access than ever to data to support transit service planning and development to even the smallest transit agency. While no substitute for full transit planning services, these tools are useful to transit managers for analyzing demographic, economic, and travel indicators for sketch planning, proposal development, and presentations to local elected officials and for other public meetings. A wide variety of tools provide output in the form of reports, spreadsheets and maps.

This article will provide an overview of a few selected free applications available on the Census website. Also provided are example outputs from these applications, and a link to a list with some of the most useful resources that I’ve found to assist rural transit service planning.

**What data do you need?**

When planning for new or expanding (or modifying your) transit services, a number of data elements are useful to help inform your decisions. For the purposes of this article we’ll examine three primary areas of needs for data: 1) population profile of your service area, 2) economic profiles of your service area, and 3) employment and/or commuter patterns. Armed with this data about your service area, you will be able to forecast demand and quantify need, evaluate existing conditions and changes in service area, and eventually plan new or expanded services.

Key indicators of a need for public transit include an assessment of low-income households, number of older people in your service area, number of people with disabilities, and households with no vehicle available. Additional indicators in determining a transit market may include single parents with children at home, military veterans, persons with high housing costs, areas with individuals with lower educational attainment, and areas with more foreign-born residents.

Rural transit agency managers do not always have a county or city planning staff that can respond quickly to Census data needs. Luckily more and more of this information is very readily available from the Census website, if you just know where to find it. Census data is updated every 10 years, if not updated on a rotating annual basis with the American Community Survey. And many of the tools allow you to generate interactive maps, all without the use of commercial GIS packages.

**ACS: A useful source of data**

The American Community Survey (ACS) is the mandatory ongoing survey from the U.S. Census that samples a small percentage of the population every year (about 3 million surveys per year). The data is collected from all counties and federally-recognized Tribes. One-year, three-year and five-year

*continued on next page*
estimates are provided; the five-year estimates are the most accurate for areas with very small populations. The 2009-2013 five-year estimates are the most recently available.

**Census tools** Continued from page 11

We’re going to take a brief look at three tools on the Census.gov website that provide a great deal of power for transit planning: OnTheMap, American Fact Finder, and QuickFacts. Several others are useful to transit agencies, such as Census Explorer, Census Data Mapper, Census Flows Mapper, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE), and TigerWEB. A resource list, available online from the Kansas RTAP page, provides some details about these resources along with website addresses (see page 14).

**OnTheMap.** This is a web-based mapping and reporting application that illustrates where workers are employed and where they live. OnTheMap also provides companion reports on age, earnings, industry distributions, race, ethnicity, educational attainment, and gender. The data driving this application is based on 2002-2011 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin Destination Employment Statistics (LODES). The illustration on page 11 provides an example of output from the OnTheMap application.

**American Fact Finder** provides access to data about the United States, Puerto Rico and the Island Areas. Data in American FactFinder come from several censuses and surveys, including ACS, American Housing Survey, Annual Economic Surveys, Population Estimates Program, etc. The application includes both guided and advanced searches. The former sets basic search criteria while the latter allows you to set specialized geographic parameters. American Fact Finder is available at http://factfinder.census.gov. See below for an example of data generated using this tool.
**QuickFacts.** The final tool we’ll examine is QuickFacts, another tool that provides fast, easy access to summary profiles for frequently-requested data from various Census Bureau programs. The profiles are available for the nation, states, counties and places. A few examples of some of the tables you will find in QuickFacts relevant to planning new service or making service changes include housing costs and auto ownership.

QuickFacts is particularly useful when you are looking for one specific element in your service area, for example, how many veterans live in your county or city—or what percent of my population under the age of 65 has a disability—and dozens of others. I have not found the mapping function in QuickFacts to be extremely sophisticated, only displaying at the county level. The maps do provide comparisons of the selected data item from one county to another, as shown at right. Some components of QuickFacts are in Beta version (2.0), and illustrate some of the improvements under development; e.g. search by zip code, an improved table display, a “browse more data” feature, and download data.

QuickFacts provides a quick map to show relative frequencies of particular Census data questions, in this case: “Where are the highest numbers of veterans living in Kansas counties?” By clicking on a county, it is possible to see the exact number, as well as relative comparisons across all counties in Kansas.

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**Table 1. Strengths and limitations of these tools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Tool</th>
<th>General Description</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>American FactFinder</strong></td>
<td>Provides primary access to data from the American Community Survey, the Economic Census, the Population Estimates Program and Annual Economic Survey. A Thematic Map can be created from any table that displays more than one geography of the same type (more than one state, more than one county, etc.).</td>
<td>Provides both guided searches and advanced customized searches, integrating multiple data sets. Very easy to use to create tables.</td>
<td>Mapping function is somewhat difficult to use – not all levels of geography are supported by mapping. Best used for tables of data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QuickFacts</strong></td>
<td>Provides frequently requested Census Bureau information at the national, state, county, and city level.</td>
<td>Quick, easy listings of key Census data.</td>
<td>Analysis detail is limited to the county level. Basic thematic map displays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OnTheMap</strong></td>
<td>Mapping &amp; reporting application showing where workers are employed &amp; where they live with companion reports on worker characteristics.</td>
<td>Multiple parameters to display on maps and in graphical charts. Very useful in visualizing the travel patterns of the workforce to support employment transportation planning.</td>
<td>Requires some practice to consistently display the maps and charts (primarily because of its strength in allowing customization).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: KU Transportation Center, 2015; U.S. Bureau of the Census
To contact one of our faculty or staff members, call toll-free (800) 248-0350 (in Kansas) or (785) 864-2595 (outside Kansas). Send correspondence to:

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Send e-mail messages to Pat Weaver at weaver@ku.edu or Lisa Harris at LHarris@ku.edu. Visit our website at http://www.ksrtap.org.

In addition to publishing the Kansas TransReporter, Kansas RTAP offers a variety of other educational services. Following is a partial list of these services:

- Publication dissemination
- Program planning assistance
- Technical assistance
- Video lending library
- Telephone consultation
- Computer database searches
- Training development
- Referral services
- Website

Census tools Continued from page 13

A recap

Table 1 (see previous page) provides a summary of the basic characteristics and best uses for each of the tools covered in this article to help you get started. One of the best ways to learn about the tools is to just dive in and start clicking through the options provided for each of the tools. In addition, video tutorials are available for many of the applications. The resource list shown in the Sources below will help you find the additional tools and those that might best serve your needs.

And, if you have difficulty using the tools and do not have local technical support available to you, help is readily available from your State Census Data Center(s). A listing of all the State Census Data Centers is available at: https://www.census.gov/sdc/network.html.

Census-Related Resources

- Institute for Policy and Social Research (http://www.ipscku.edu/), The University of Kansas. Xan Wedel (xan@ku.edu), (785) 864-9111.

22nd National Conference on Rural and Intercity Bus Transportation

Bright Horizons, Rural Innovations, Transportation Solutions

Renaissance Asheville
Asheville, NC
October 2-5, 2016

The National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation provides information, training, and discussion on best practices and current research in rural public and intercity bus transportation. Rural transit and human service transit providers, tribal transit managers, planners, state transportation and human service agency staff, intercity us operators, consultants researchers, trainers and others with an interest in rural transportation are invited to attend.

For more program information, visit the conference website at http://www.ribtc.org.

Call For Presentations

Accepting proposals for presentations through January 8, 2016. Visit http://www.ribtc.org to submit your proposal online.
**CONFERENCES**

**November 5, 2015**

**November 17, 2015**
National RTAP Marketing Toolkit Demonstration Webinar. 1:30-2:30 p.m. National RTAP. For more information and to register, https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1621462261659906561

**November 11-13, 2015**

**February 1-3, 2016**

**January 10-14, 2016**

**RESOURCES**

**National RTAP Recorded Webinars**
There are on a variety of topics relevant to rural transit agencies, include ADA and Rural Transportation, Charter Service and School Transportation, Drug and Alcohol Testing, Ethics in Transit Decision-Making, Rides to Wellness, Social Media, and more. http://nationalrtap.org/Webinars

**Census Data Tools to Support Rural Transit Service Planning Resource List.**

**National RTAP Marketing Toolkit Worksheets**

**ORDER FORM**

Some of the resources we advertise are available in hard copy for readers who do not have internet access. These resources have a checkbox in the listing. Check the item(s) you would like to receive and fill out the form below. Fax to (785) 864-3199.

Name _____________________________________________________________ Title _________________________________________________

Agency ___________________________________________________________ Phone _______________________________________________

Street Address _____________________________________________________ E-mail address ________________________________________

City __________________________    State ___________________________ Zip+4 __________________
The Kansas TransReporter is an educational and technology transfer newsletter published quarterly by the Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC). The newsletter is free to rural and specialized transit providers and others with an interest in rural and specialized service. The Kansas TransReporter is co-sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration under its Rural Transportation Assistance Program (RTAP) and the Kansas Department of Transportation.

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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Host a hands-on workshop at your location:

- Advanced Mobility Device Securement
- Evacuation Techniques for Rural Transit Passengers

Contact Anne Lowder at 785-864-1469 or alowder@ku.edu to schedule either of these workshops in your area July - November.

**To register for a Kansas RTAP workshop, go to http://www.ksrtap.org. Click on “Register to attend.”**

Questions? Contact Kristin Kelly at (785) 864-2594 or kkelly@ku.edu.

Calendar

2015 KANSAS RTAP TRAINING:

**Techniques for Driving Defensively**
November 4 in Ottawa

This workshop provides tools to improve defensive driving skills in transit services, recognizing the special challenge of driving oversized and heavier vehicles while transporting passengers. The morning session covers the special characteristics of driving defensively: overcoming blind spots, longer stopping distances, and the higher center of gravity of transit vehicles. The afternoon session includes a Toolbox for Transit Operator Fatigue which offers a variety of techniques to deal with operator fatigue. This course utilizes the curriculum of the National Safety Council Coaching the Van Driver III, National Transit Institute and the curriculum of Curbing Transit Operator Distracted Driving, developed by Florida DOT and USDOT Transportation Safety Institute. This training satisfies the KDOT-RTAP Driver Training requirement.

**Advance Mobility Device Securement Skills and Development: Skills for Securing the “Difficult to Secure” Devices**
November 19 in Augusta

The objective of this training is to provide transit operators with strategies and best practices for 1) securing powered mobility devices that often lack traditional securement points and 2) placing lap belts on the passengers who use mobility devices as transit seating. Participants will review pre-trip preparation, on-board tools and equipment, effective strap securement locations, and safe work practices. Participants will then practice securement techniques on a variety of mobility devices, e.g. powered wheelchairs, scooters and other difficult-to-secure assistive devices. This course is based on materials developed by the National Transit Institute. This training satisfies the KDOT-RTAP Driver Training requirement.

Check periodically at http://www.ksrtap.org under “RTAP Calendar” for training we will offer in 2016, currently being scheduled.