

Transit Bulletin

Volume 10, Number 8

Bus Rodeo Edition!

August 2009

Special Points of Interest:

- **2009 MN Bus Rodeo results and photos!**
- **5310 Grant Application info**
- **"Disability Etiquette" handbook available**
- **New riders? Help them connect with your service!**

22nd Minnesota Bus Rodeo Held in Albert Lea

The 22nd annual Minnesota Bus Rodeo was held on Saturday, July 25th in Albert Lea. Hosted by **Albert Lea Transit**, this year's theme was, "Buses Between the Lakes," highlighting the natural beauty surrounding the competition. Thirty transit organizations were represented by 49 driver/contestants.

The event began on Friday evening, July 24th, with driver/contestant registration and a "mixer" that allowed participants to view a

DVD of **2008 Large Bus Division winner, Duane Dufner of St. Cloud Metro Bus**, while he competed on the **American Public Transportation Association of America's (APTA) National Large Bus Rodeo competition course**.

The competition was kicked off at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 25th, with an opening ceremony featuring the **Albert Lea Veterans of Foreign Wars Color Guard** and inspirational words from **Albert**

Lea Transit Director, Garry Hart and Mn/DOT Office of Transit Director, Mike Schadauer.

In addition to competing, all drivers took an STS certified training course, "Customer Service: The Next Level," taught by **St. Cloud Metro Bus Trainer, Kate Boelter.**

The day concluded with all driver/contestants being honored at the "Buses Between the Lakes" Awards evening and dinner, held at the Albert Lea Armory.

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Idar Bilij of Metro Transit, poses with his daughter at the competition.



MN Bus Rodeo 2009 Winner's Circle (left to right) Steve Barnsdorf, Duane Dufner, Myron Engle, Ken Rakke, Virgil Goltz and Fausto Cambi.



Jim Schenk of Hiawathaland, awaits his signal to start the course.



A big thank you to Jacqueline Forner, our 18-year Rodeo Committee veteran, who will be retiring next year!



Nur Mohamad, Hector Espinoza and Angela Ellis wait to compete.



Myron Engle pictured with his biggest cheerleader, his wife, Sally.



Fans from Metro Transit cheer on the drivers during the competition. Thank you to our "Heckler's Row" for their support each year!

MN Bus Rodeo 2009 Winner's Circle

Large Bus Division

- 1st Place: Ken Rakke of St. Cloud Metro Bus
- 2nd Place: Duane Dufner of St. Cloud Metro Bus
- 3rd Place: Steve Barnsdorf of Duluth Transit

Small Bus Division

- 1st Place: Fausto Cambi of First Transit
- 2nd Place: Todd DeZurick of St. Cloud Metro Bus
- 3rd Place: Virgil Goltz of Brown County Transit

Driver's Choice Award Winner

Myron Engle of Watonwan County TMT



Otter Tail's Darcy Sorenson was featured by a local news crew!

Mn/DOT Schedules 5310 Grant Application Release for Sept 1



Workshops will be available in October to assist you in the application process!

The Elderly Persons and Persons With Disabilities Program (Federal Section 5310) is intended to meet the special needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities for whom existing transportation services are unavailable, insufficient or inappropriate.

These grant funds are available for purchasing lift-equipped vehicles for replacement or expansion of current services or initiation of new service. This grant program provides 80% of vehicle costs; recipients contribute 20% of non-federal funds.

Important Application Dates
Application Release: September 1, 2009
Applications Due: December 1, 2009

Who is Eligible to Apply
 Minnesota entities who fall into the following categories are eligible to apply for these grant funds:
 -State or local governments
 -Private nonprofit organizations
 -Operators of public transportation services
 -Private operators of public transportation services
 -Tribal transit organizations

Workshops Available to Help Applicants



Following is a list of workshops designed to help organizations and operators apply for these funds. Details regarding exact location and time will be released at a later date—but it's a great idea to mark your calendar and "save the date" now!

- October 2: Arden Hills
- October 7: Bemidji
- October 8: Hibbing
- October 20: St. Cloud
- October 23: Owatonna

Other upcoming dates to note:

- Section 5310 Grant Application Release **Sept 1**
- MN RTAP Advisory Committee Meeting **St. Paul Sept 14**
- MN Public Transit Conferences **Duluth Sept 21-23**
- Towards Zero Death Conference **Duluth Oct 28-29**

August 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3 Driver Refresher Lakewood Staples	4 <i>Coast Guard Day</i> 	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
STS Trainer Series: Maltreatment Awareness (August 11) & Passenger Assistance (August 12-14) <i>Arden Hills, Minnesota</i>						
16	17	18	19	20 <i>National Homeless Animals Day</i> 	21	22 Passenger Assistance Tri-CAP St. Cloud
23/30	24/31	25	26 <i>Women's Equality Day</i>	27	28	29 Def. Driving / Maltreatment Awareness Tri-CAP St. Cloud
					5311, 5316 & 5317 Grant Applications Due	

ADA Q & A: How can I help my staff learn more about the ADA and working with disabled riders and coworkers?

Drivers, dispatchers and office staff come into contact with our transit customers every day. For most transit organizations, a good share of these individuals are disabled and protected by the American's With Disabilities Act (ADA.) In addition to this, many organizations have disabled workers on their staff.

Helping staff members learn more about the ADA and assisting them in finding ways to more effectively work with and alongside disabled customers and coworkers is a valuable discussion that should be an ongoing part of transit staff education. In this month's ADA Q & A, we would like to feature a publication that can help managers with this.

The **Seattle Office for Civil Rights** in **Seattle, Washing-**

ton, has released an short easy-to-read manual called, "A Disability Etiquette Handbook." The 11-page handbook can be easily downloaded for employee reading. We suggest that you might want to dedicate 15 minutes of a staff meeting to an individual chapter discussion of the topics covered.

Handbook Topics

Following are some of the areas the handbook covers:

- 1) Distinction between disability and handicap
- 2) An easy-to-understand look at the ADA in regards to employment, state and local government operations and public accommodations.
- 3) Telecommunications relay devices

- 4) Conversation and reception etiquette
- 5) A glossary of terms that reflect respect and dignity when someone is speaking with a person who is disabled.

Topics that Help Managers

One of the most interesting aspects of this little handbook are the chapters that cover interviewing etiquette and courtesies. These include tips on interviewing people who use mobility aids, have vision and speech disabilities and who are hard of hearing. This is something transit managers may want to keep on hand and refer to prior to hiring staff.



To download "A Disability Etiquette Handbook,"

go to:
www.seattle.gov/civilrights/documents/Etiquetteguide-final.pdf

Helping New Riders Make the Transit Connection



The present economy has brought a large increase in ridership to many Minnesota transit organizations. Many of these riders are individuals who have never taken the bus before, but are finding that the cost of traveling alone, or maintaining a car, is no longer in line with their budget.

Having a new rider on the bus, especially when the demand on the buses time is

increasing, can be a challenge. Getting a new rider "up to speed" regarding how to use your transit service can help their transition to public transit, aid your bus driver in being able to deliver a high level of service and save your staff from answering telephone questions or fielding complaints.

Consider taking a few simple steps to make the transition smoother and faster:

1. Make sure that there is a supply "how to ride" literature available on each bus and in public areas where bus passes are sold or your service is advertised.

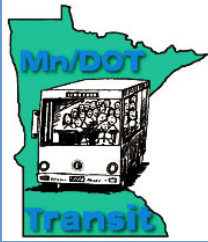
2. If you don't have a "how to ride" guide or your present publication doesn't seem user-friendly for new passengers, consider typing up a simple flyer with tips for new riders.

3. Offer a "How to Ride" instructional class as your community's senior facilities, employment centers or even a shopping mall. This could be led by experienced rider volunteers if you can't spare the staff time. *(They may be honored that you value their knowledge and asked!)*

4. Remind your drivers that they may be encountering new riders and ask them to exercise patience as these individuals learn how to use your service.

Consider offering a "How to Ride" class at a senior facility, employment center or even a shopping mall in your community.

HINT: Ask experienced riders to volunteer to lead the class!



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The "Driver's Spotlight" Information Sheet

Provide the requested information about the driver you would like to see honored in the "Driver's Spotlight" and email or fax sheet to **Lynn Frank**, TB editor/writer at: lynn.frank@dot.state.mn.us or **651-366-4170**

ATTACH AN ELECTRONIC PHOTO IF POSSIBLE!

Driver Name _____

Transit Organization _____

Driving Career Length _____

I would like to see this driver honored for:

- Going over and above his/her duties for passengers and the community
- A long and /or distinguished career in the industry
- Retiring from the industry
- Making a difference by the small, but significant, things he/she does
- Other

Please specify: _____

Please share why you feel this driver should be honored for this:

Please list any awards or commendations this driver has received on the job or from the community:

Add any additional information or commentary you would like to make about this driver:

Your Name _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____