TRANSREPORT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ILLINOIS RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC) was created in 1990 and operates under an inter-agency agreement with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT). The RTAC mission is to promote the safe and effective delivery of public transportation in rural areas and more efficiently use public and private resources. RTAC fulfills its mission through providing the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) for the State of Illinois. Administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), an RTAP exists in each state to provide training, technical assistance and research, and to promote public and specialized transportation in rural areas.

Thank you to everyone who participated & volunteered at the 20th Annual Roadeo.

Participants

Mary Law
Tom Milby
James Grover
Crystal Evers
David Torres
Parish McAllister
Ron Hearne
Eddie Smith
Lisa Reynolds
Kim Pind
Angie Pruitt
Colleen Willams

Volunteers

Norm Smith
Connor Schwinn
Kevin Tavender
Brian Van Hine
Ryan Neale
Sara Nollman-Hodge
Jamie Downes
Nelson Pruitt
Sherri Bassen
Calvin Shannon
Mike Pietrowski
Nichole Haynes
Aaron Hodge
Miranda Lambert
Jill Lyons
Ron Gorst
Justin Johnson
Tony Jackson

RTAC Rural Transit Assistance Center

IIRA Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

Spring 2024

In this issue

- RTAC Updates with Dave
- Roadeo Pictures
- News & Happenings
- Save the Dates
- IL RTAP Advisory Council

RTAC NOTES

DAVE PATTON, DIRECTOR

Thanks largely to the extra effort of our Roadeo course manager, Tony Jackson (Shawnee Mass Transit District), and his colleagues Ron Gorst and Aaron Hodge, we had another great Roadeo in New Berlin at the Sangamon County Fairgrounds. The skies opened up on set-up day when we measured and marked the driving obstacle course. The portion of the property at the Fairgrounds which we normally use for the course was under water and the forecast was for more rain overnight. So, Tony decided that we would use a larger, rectangular, gravel-covered area north of the buildings. This ground is probably used for parking trailers and campers during other events, but it was nearly obstruction-free and it was draining water, so Tony figured out where to start the survey and measuring and we went to it. Did I mention that it was also very windy? The horizontal rain made it even more challenging to create the course but the show would go on. The sunnier skies on Roadeo Saturday were welcome and the large gathering and competitors had a great day, with Kim Pind of Shawnee MTD driving home the win and a chance to compete at the CTAA Roadeo national championship in June. The full results are later in this issue. We sincerely thank all of our competitors and judges for their participation and work. The Roadeo is a fun and challenging event and we are gratified that the competitors want to come back and try again in future runnings.

As part of a long-term project designed to assist rural public transportation providers to recruit drivers, RTAC created and produced items in a kit which may be loaned for use at any appropriate event. As of now we are testing the concept within HSTP Regions 1 and 3, where the items are stored with Coordinator Connor Schwinn. The size of the floor banners makes it difficult to ship the kit(s), so we decided to ask Connor to store the kits in his office, in this initial trial, and to make them available as needed. RTAC and the Coordinator will market the availability of the kits and provide some background to each region's agencies going forward. It will be up to the Coordinator and agency to make arrangements for transferring the kits and returning them, etc. If you are outside of HSTP Regions 1 and 3, but are interested in obtaining a kit for use at a job fair or other event, please contact me.

The kit consists of two sets of the following:

- Blue Tablecloth
- Pull-up floor banner
- 500 information cards with blank space for an agency to insert its own contact information
- Two card holders/displays

The cards and banner, as part of their design, incorporate a QR-code which takes the viewer to a website for rural public transportation driver recruitment. This site includes an interactive map of the state, by county, which puts the viewer two clicks away from the website of the public transportation provider in each county. The site also includes links to online videos with driver testimonials explaining why they love their driving jobs.

Roadeo Pictures

1st Place Winner - Kim Pind

Tony, Ron and Aaron getting the course ready

Gearing up for the Roadeo

Roadeo Participants

More Roadeo Pictures

1st Place - Kim Pind
2nd Place - Angela Pruitt
3rd Place - Mary Law
Novice Award - Crystal Evers

Colleen securing Connor in the wheelchair securement portion of the roadeo

CTAA National Roadeo

CTAA National Roadeo Participants

Kim and Mary celebrating at the CTAA National Roadeo Awards

News & Happenings

Sherry Miller started her career with Dial-A-Ride in May of 1994. Sherry has been serving her community by safely transporting passengers for 30 years as of today! What an accomplishment! Sherry is a team player, a wealth of knowledge, and a true asset to the Dial-A-Ride team. Sherry has always been quick to rush to the aid of her fellow drivers. If a bus breaks down, you can count on Sherry being there and offering help. Most times, she is not even asked to help, she just does it! She truly has a servant's heart on and off the bus! Her quick wit and orneriness (yes, I said it) make her a pleasure to work with! She has also maintained a safe driving record during her time with Dial-A-Ride. With hundreds of thousands of miles under her belt, safety has and will remain Sherry's priority. She is a blessing to the program and Dial-A-Ride is so proud of her. Thank you, Sherry, for 30 years of dedicated driving to the community and the riders you serve, the Dial-A-Ride program, and for 30 years of safe driving! She has and continues to make a difference in the lives of her passengers with each trip she provides. Congratulations, Sherry!

SAVE THE DATES

2024 IPTA Conference
September 4-6, 2024
Moline, IL

2025 RTAC Spring Conference
March 4-6, 2025
Northfield Conference Center
Springfield, IL

IL RTAP Advisory Council
Adam Lach, Rides MTD, Chair
Morgan Lewis, Warren County PCOM, Vice Chair
Kate Downing, Sangamon/Menard Co. Area Regional Transit
Stefanie Eisele, Dept. on Aging
Sarah Nollman-Hodge, South Central IL MTD
Sherry Hicks, FAYCO, Inc.
Kim Zimmerman, North Central Area Transit
Ron Gorst, Shawnee Mass Transit District

Rural Transit Assistance Center (RTAC) Staff
David Patton, Director, DC-Patton@wiu.edu, 309.298.3392
Mable Kreps, Transit Specialist, MR-Kreps@wiu.edu, 309.298.2141
Ed Heflin, Transit Specialist, EL-Heflin@wiu.edu, 309.298.2377
Jamie Bainter, Transit Specialist, JR-Bainter@wiu.edu, 309-298-3319

Toll-Free Telephone: 800.526.9943
Fax: 309.298.2162
RTAC Website: www.iira.org/rtac/

Western Illinois University complies fully with all applicable federal and state nondiscrimination laws, orders, and regulations. The University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity institution and affirms its dedication to nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, disability, or veteran status in employment, programs, and services.

Our mailing address is:
Rural Transit Assistance Center
Western Illinois University,
Stipes Hall 318, 1 University Circle
Macomb, IL 61455

Western Illinois University