

Passenger Trans-Actions

Fall/Winter 1997

Michigan Department of Transportation • UPTRAN • Passenger Transportation Division • "We Move People"
"Providing Michigan citizens with the best passenger transportation services through quality customer assistance."

Welfare Reform

The Transportation Services Section, Passenger Transportation Division, continues to be involved with the Family Independence Agency (FIA) and the Michigan Jobs Commission (MJC) to try to meet the transportation need of welfare recipients getting to and from work, training, and/or child care sites. There are many interrelated programs and activities occurring to address this issue. As a result, there is a major coordination effort at the state level to match programs and to minimize duplication of services.

UPTRAN sponsors a state level Transportation to Work Task Force that is comprised of eight different agencies, including a representative from Governor Engler's office. The purpose of the task force is to provide an interagency mechanism that addresses issues preventing access to jobs for welfare recipients.

We are also partners in Project Zero, which is a FIA program geared toward helping clients gain and retain employment. The goal of Project Zero is to reduce to zero the number of public assistance households without earned income in 12 pilot areas. The original six sites were Alpena, Menominee, Midland, and Ottawa Counties, and the Tireman and Romulus districts in Wayne County. The new sites include Berrien, Hillsdale, Kent, and Manistee Counties, and the Greendale and Warren Conner districts in Wayne County.

Another program aiding the welfare to work effort is the regional transportation program, which is in its second year. The purpose of the regional program is to facilitate travel across county lines. One of the focuses of the trips being provided as part of this program has been access to jobs that may not be available within the service area of the transit provider.

Some future activities regarding welfare reform will involve additional coordination efforts. We have been awarded a National Governors' Association (NGA) grant to be used for transportation planning activities as they relate to welfare reform. In addition, our FY 1998 budget includes \$2 million in state funds dedicated to work first transportation initiatives. We are currently developing an application for the distribution of the \$2 million in conjunction with the Transportation to Work Task Force.

With the NGA grant monies, we intend to evaluate our efforts regarding the original six Project Zero sites. We also plan to hold seminars with the Work Force Development Boards, Michigan Works! Agencies (MWA), FIA, transit providers, and other interested parties across the state. (Work Force Development Boards oversee the activities of the MWA, which are subcontractors to the MJC.) These seminars will be used to facilitate local activities regarding transportation to work initiatives. Direct involvement in this effort by local transit agencies is the key to ensuring that these individuals have access to transportation when entering the job market and also over the long term as they become permanently employed.

Welfare reform has become a high priority and can be complex when dealing with the other agencies involved in this effort. It is our goal to meet the transportation needs of welfare to work individuals by utilizing and enhancing existing services to the extent possible and by maximizing programs that are already in place. Efforts to overcome "bureaucratic barriers" at the state level will continue. However, for welfare reform to truly succeed, the coordination effort has to come from the local level.



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"M•DOT-Providing the highest quality transportation services for economic benefit and improved quality of life."



PTMS Update

The Public Transportation Management System (PTMS) is now installed and operational at approximately 50 transit agencies (TA's). The TA's have been using the system to submit their quarterly Operating Assistance Reports, and will also submit their 1999 Annual Applications through the PTMS. We expect to have PTMS systems working and training completed at all 70 public transit agencies by mid-January, 1998.

PTMS now connects via the Internet through an Internet Service Provider (ISP). All public transit agencies are requested to obtain an ISP for this purpose. The costs are low - usually \$15 to \$20 a month.

The TA's seem pleased by their ability to "send-in" quarterly Operating Assistance Reports and update information on-line from within the PTMS. It's fun to make a change while you're talking to someone on the phone (long distance), and then see the change almost immediately! The e-mail provided through the ISP is also a big hit, and a variety of good uses for e-mail are foreseen.

The PTMS is continually updated to fix problems and enhance capabilities. If you log onto the PTMS and get a message saying that there has been an update - please exit the program, and contact Kathy Urda. Kathy We will let you know if there has been a new release and when you can expect to receive your update. The updates are sent to you on CD-ROM (with installation instructions) as soon as possible after the update has occurred. There was a new release on December 12th - if you have not received your update CD yet, please contact Kathy.

If you have any comments or questions regarding the PTMS, please call Kathy Urda at (517) 335-2575 or e-mail her at urdak@mdot.state.mi.us.



PTD Advisory Team Update

The re-constitution of the membership of the Passenger Transportation Division Advisory Teams is nearing completion. The newly formed teams are expected to meet in early 1998.

The teams are as follows:

- **Advance Research and Technology**
- **Demand Estimation/Modeling**
- **Management**
- **Specialized Services/Coordination**
- **Strategic Planning Advisory Council**
- **Training/Education**
- **Vehicle and Equipment**

If you are interested in joining a team, please contact Linda Tuttle at (517) 373-7645.

Marketing Contracts Become Multi-Year

The delay in the release of the FY 1998 marketing contracts is due to the implementation of a new multi-year contract. The contract language has been approved and the contracts should be mailed in January. The new contract term is 5 years beginning October 1, 1998 and ending on September 30, 2003. Funding for years subsequent to FY 1998 will be contingent on legislative approval. Additional information will be available in the near future.

Contact your project manager if you have any questions concerning the marketing contracts.



New Vehicle Contracts

M•DOT has awarded two vehicle contracts to National Mobility Corporation (NMC) from Elkhart Indiana. NMC will build two types of mini-van conversions: one with a raised roof and lowered floor and the other with just a lowered floor. Any questions may be directed to Jerome Jonson at (517) 335-2568.

Medium Duty Bus Bid

M•DOT is soliciting bids through the DMB for a new medium-duty bus contract. Vendor/Manufacturer interest has been great. The contract should be awarded and available by February 1998. Any questions may be directed to Jerome Jonson at (517) 335-2568.

Cutaway Contracts

The two "pilot model" cutaways built by Eldorado National under the department's contract with Hoekstra Truck Equipment Company, Inc. have been approved. Regular production will begin on existing orders immediately.

Two "pilot model" buses have been identified and ordered for the narrow body cutaway. These buses will be built by Goshen Coach under the department's contract with Transportation Equipment Sales Corporation.

Any questions may be directed to Jerome Jonson at (517) 335-2568.

Vehicle Leasing

M•DOT in conjunction with the DMB has begun a vehicle lease demonstration as a funding alternative with the 1997 Section 5309 (formerly Section 3) grant. This alternative will allow MDOT to address a greater amount of the vehicle replacement needs in the state by spreading costs over the life of the vehicle. It is estimated that M•DOT will fund 64 replacement buses during this project versus 19 vehicles if they were purchased.

Mini-vans, small and medium size replacement vehicles, which are available on existing DMB contracts, will be purchased through DMB's lease agreement with Wheels, Inc. and then subleased by M•DOT to the transit agency.

As federal and state capital funds traditionally do not meet total replacement needs for eligible vehicles, it has become necessary to look at alternative procurement options for meeting our customer's needs. Any questions may be directed to Al Johnson at (517) 335-2549.

Vehicle Manufacturer Focuses on Quality, Customer Satisfaction

The successful launch or redesign of any new vehicle is contingent on how the customer rates the overall vehicle. At least one vehicle manufacturer has identified warranty problems as the true measure of quality. Warranty work, such as the replacement of a transmission or light bulb on a new vehicle is an inconvenience to the customer and is reflected in how the customer views the quality of the new vehicle.

There are five problem areas that give vehicles a bad customer satisfaction rating. Manufacturers call them the fatal five:

- **Electrical problems**
- **Water leaks**
- **Squeaks and rattles**
- **Paint chips and scratches**
- **Fluid leaks**

This list contains 90 percent of the warranty problems on any vehicle. Management and labor discuss these problems every day and try to eliminate them. A reduction in the warranty work necessitated by the fatal five translates into improved customer satisfaction.

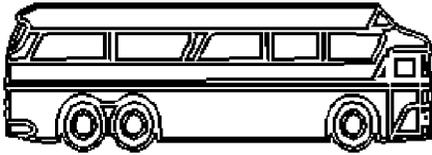
If the list above is familiar and seems to describe a new bus you received, it's a coincidence. This article described Lansing's GM plants' preliminary work to launch the redesigned Grand Am and new Oldsmobile Alero.



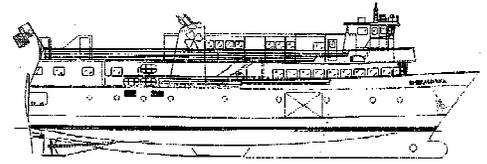
Season's Greetings

from

Passenger Transportation Division



Around the State



Intercity Bus Service Restored

In conjunction with the Delta Area Transit Authority (DATA) facility dedication in Escanaba, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held on Friday, September 19, 1997, to celebrate the re-institution of intercity bus service in the upper peninsula. The new carrier is Superior Transportation, Inc. of Houghton, Michigan. Robert Ruoho is president and owner. Approximately 80 people were in attendance, with the media well represented. The service began on Monday, September 22, 1997.

The routes provided are from St. Ignace to Duluth, Minnesota, and Calumet to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The connection point where passengers can change buses is in Escanaba at the new DATA facility. Since the start of the service, over 2,500 passengers have used the service, averaging 170 passengers per week.

It should be noted that not only have UPTRAN staff assisted in the success of getting this service underway, but the local transit agencies in the UP have also offered assistance. Bob Neimi, Marquette County Transit Authority, made his marketing manager available to help develop marketing strategies for the service. Jim Mildren, Gogebic County Transit, has taken over 100 phone calls requesting schedules and general information. He has also distributed 150 schedules and has committed to include the Superior Transportation bus schedule on advertisements for the local bus service. Scott MacInnis, Houghton City Manager, helped locate a facility to house Superior Transportation and has offered to assist in marketing the service. Ray Leach, DATA manager, has personally opened the facility at midnight nearly every night since the service began to sell tickets and to allow passengers to enter the building and use vending machines and restrooms. He has also made his drivers' break room available to the intercity drivers and has provided them with refreshments to help them during their shifts.

This is invaluable service to the UP and there is wide interest in this bus service succeeding. It is expected as the service continues that the ridership will increase.

Emerald Isle Arrives in Michigan

The Beaver Island Transportation Authority's new vessel arrived to the Great Lakes region in late November, 1997. The 130' twin engine vessel will carry up to 300 passengers and 20 vehicles across the 30 miles of Lake Michigan that lie between the City of Charlevoix and Beaver Island. It is anticipated the hull design and two 1,500 horsepower engines will shorten the two and one-quarter hour trip to two hours or less.

This \$3.6 million vessel was designed by Timothy Graul Marine Design of Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin, and constructed by the Washburn and Doughty Shipyard in Boothbay, Maine. Dock modifications have been completed in the City of Charlevoix to accommodate this new vessel, and dock modifications for Beaver Island commenced in November, 1997. The \$1.3 million Beaver Island dock modifications were designed by United Design Associates of Cheboygan, Michigan, and constructed by R.B. Lyons, Inc., of Charlevoix, Michigan. Upon completion of the Island dock modifications in the summer of 1998, this new vessel will be placed into service. A formal dedication is being planned for the Spring of 1998.

Funding for this project was provided through a combination of federal, state and local funding. Congratulations to the Beaver Island Transportation Authority.

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Center for Transportation Education and Development Schedule of Courses

Paratransit Scheduling and Dispatching	March 23-25, 1998
Innovative Strategies to Increase Ridership	March 30-April 1, 1998
Passenger Assistance Training to Proficiency	June 22-24, 1998
Passenger Assistance Train-the-Trainer: Designing In-House System Standards	June 25-26, 1998
Managing and Planning Paratransit Operations	July 13-17, 1998
Transit Management for Fixed-Route Service	August 17-21, 1998
Native American Transit Systems: Effectively Connecting Our People	September 14-15, 1998
Coordination Strategies: Models of Excellence	October 5-6, 1998
Designing Travel Training for Transit Agencies	October 12-14, 1998
Establishing Non-Emergency Ambulance Service	TBA

For more information, please call Wyatt Osato at (414) 227-3332.

Wanted-- Bus Drivers for Small Bus Roadeo

July 29, 1998 - Holiday Inn South, Lansing.

Plans are underway for the 1998 Small Bus Roadeo, and "we're gonna' need lotsa' bus drivers" to help make it the success it was in 1997. Now is the time to start planning your own roadeo or doing a regional roadeo so your drivers can become familiar with all Roadeo events, and it could help your transit agency to win the first-place trophy. Team and individual competitions will again be held in 1998.



Happy
Holidays!

LUGNUT OUTING - The night before the roadeo (July 28), an evening activity to the "Lugnuts" game in Lansing is being planned. The "Lugnuts" is our minor league baseball team (they won the Midwest League championship this year). Also, we will supply transportation to the game from the Holiday Inn to downtown Lansing and return.

Please put July 28 and 29, 1998, on your calendar as you won't want to miss any of the planned events. More information on the Roadeo and the evening activity will be sent to you in April.

Staff Coming and Going

Welcome to Lori Cole a new Financial Analyst who has filled the position vacated by Ren Hawkes' retirement. Lori works for Angel Fandalan, supervisor of the Financial Management Unit in the Program Administration Section. Lori is responsible for managing statutory operating assistance and initiates payments. She also processes all project closeouts.

Lori comes to us from the Department of Environmental Quality (spin-off from DNR) where she was a financial analyst. She also teaches various computer software classes at a local computer consultant company in the evening. Lori can be reached (517) 335-2556 or Email: colet@mdot.state.mi.us

Good-bye to Jim Peterson after nine and one-half years with UPTRAN. Jim was originally the division marketing coordinator and worked on many special projects. Most recently Jim assumed the responsibilities of the state RTAP and MTAP coordinator, and was program manager for the Michigan Transit Center for Excellence project. In addition, he was editor and producer of Passenger Trans-Actions the division newsletter.

Jim is going to the Michigan Guaranty Agency within the Department of Treasury. We wish him well in his future endeavors.



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The focus of the INTERCHANGE is to establish a forum for information-sharing among groups and provide information regarding programs and activities that affect seniors and persons with disabilities. If you wish to share information with others through this bulletin, or would like to see specific issues addressed, please write or call Rose Ann Ward, UPTRAN, P.O. Box 30050, Lansing, MI 48909, (517) 335-2598.