

## DRIVER EMPLOYMENT APPROACHES

### *Ludington Mass Transit Authority, Ludington, Michigan*

#### SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGY:

Ludington Mass Transportation Authority employs mostly part-time drivers who are recruited through word of mouth.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION:

Many of the Ludington Mass Transportation Authority employees are former police officers, military personnel, or private sector retirees. There is very little turnover, and the transit agency is able to recruit new drivers when needed through word-of-mouth.

#### CONDITIONS THAT PROMPTED THE STRATEGY:

Ludington Mass Transportation Authority has a long history of hiring part-time employees. While this was not a formal strategy adopted to address a specific budget concern, part-time employees without benefits cost less than full-time employees with benefits.

Economic conditions and the social fabric of the community help make it possible to recruit drivers purely on word of mouth and meet their employment goals with part-time work.

#### RESULTS OF THE STRATEGY:

Most of Ludington Mass Transportation Authority's employees are part-time, and there is very little turnover among staff. The last time they needed to hire a new driver was summer of 2011. Among the transit agency's staff include drivers who have worked there from 15-20 years. The transit agency has found that retirees bring

#### AGENCY PROFILE

**Organization Type:** Independent Transit Authority

**Service Area:** City of Ludington, Michigan, along Lake Michigan. Ludington is a harbor town, served by a ferry that crosses Lake Michigan to Manitowoc, Wisconsin, mid-May through mid October. The land area is 3.4 square miles and the 2010 population was 11,295

**Resources:**

- **Fleet size:** 19 vehicles
- **Staff size:** 44 (36 are part-time)
- **FY 2012 Operating Budget:** approx. \$1.5 million

**Service Summary:**

- **Modes Operated:** demand response
- **Days and Hours of Service:** Monday-Friday 6:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m. - 4 :00 pm; Sunday 8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
- **General Public Cash Fare:** \$2
- **Passenger Trips/Year:** approx. 160,000

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a vast array of knowledge from other jobs they have had, and they are punctual and dependable.

There is a positive working environment, employees appear to have strong job satisfaction and customers frequently comment on how compassionate Ludington Mass Transportation Authority's drivers are.

### **METHODS USED TO DOCUMENT RESULTS:**

Not formally documented except through individual employment records; however, the limited turnover and ease with which positions are filled are indicative that employment practices are working well in Ludington.

### **KEY FACTORS FOR SUCCESS:**

- Being part of a close-knit, active community - In Ludington, retired people including former police officers, military personnel, and manufacturing company personnel seek part-time employment more as a means of keeping active and giving back to the community than needing to make money. They often get to know each other on the golf course and through service clubs.
- Fostering a positive work environment - Senior management strives to keep Ludington Mass Transportation Authority a job

people look forward to coming to. Other staff, such as the Office Manager, support this effort through such activities as bringing in home-made soup and organizing pot-luck meals at work. The transit agency hosts an annual employee picnic.

### **CHALLENGES:**

- Because so many of Ludington Mass Transportation Authority's do not need to work, it is sometimes a challenge to schedule their driving shifts around their lives outside of work (e.g., their golf schedules).
- In the past, when economic conditions were more favorable, additional driver recruitment efforts were sometimes needed.

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## **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE**

### **RECOMMENDED FOR:**

- Smaller organizations in close-knit communities, particularly those with a population of persons retired from service-oriented professions

### **RECOMMENDED ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS:**

- Involvement of management and employees in the community

### **METHODS FOR DOCUMENTING RESULTS:**

- Survey employees to find out how they found out about the job and what motivates them to stay

**IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS:** not applicable