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NEBRASKA PUBLIC TRANSIT

# MOBILITY MATTERS

Transit Challenges, Nebraska Solutions

WINTER 2020

## Why Mobility Matters

Welcome to Mobility Matters, a quarterly newsletter from your friends at the Center for Public Affairs Research, NDOT, and the Nebraska Safety Center.

We aim to engage with you in creating a vision of public transit's future in Nebraska by showing why mobility matters. Mobility is key to our communities, whether we are in a city of hundreds of thousands or a village of a hundred, and public transit makes mobility a reality for thousands in our state. Trips to grocery stores, barbers and stylists, medical providers, jobs, schools and colleges, or to meet family and friends mean so much more to riders than getting from point A to point B. It is freedom to live a full, independent life regardless of circumstances.

Our newsletter will highlight stories illustrating how mobility matters and cover topics that matter to transit managers. Inside our publication, you will find: NDOT updates and FTA guidance, upcoming events, and inspiring stories of success.

To help us talk about what matters to our Nebraska Public Transit community, we invite you to submit your own stories, questions, and comments, because our state shares your concerns. You can submit ideas to [mgharrington@unomaha.edu](mailto:mgharrington@unomaha.edu), or contact Matt Harrington at 402-554-5976.

I want to thank you all personally for the work you have done during the COVID-19 outbreak. It has affected no two systems exactly the same way, and I appreciate the efforts you have made to both protect



your employees and serve your communities. We cover the response to the pandemic in this issue, and as I read over all the stories that we could not include, I felt pride in your ingenuity, perseverance, compassion, and dedication to safety. At a time when we should have been celebrating Public Transit together, you showed why we celebrate you.

Thank you, and enjoy Mobility Matters!

**Bill Bivin**  
 Statewide Mobility Manager

### RESCHEDULED: NATP TRANSIT MANAGER'S WORKSHOP IN KEARNEY

**AUGUST 5** Training from the NDOT and University Teams

**AUGUST 6** Technology Fair with Scheduling and Dispatch Software Demos

# CAREing and Adapting to COVID-19

By Matt Harrington

COVID-19 posed challenges and obstacles to public transit unlike anything in our lifetimes, so the first message we want to send to you is 'Thank You'. We know every agency made tough decisions to ensure the safety of their passengers in the last few months. From increasing vehicle cleaning, to ordering the appropriate personal protective equipment, to designing new purposes for transit trips, to making the hard choice to limit services, we appreciate all you do.

Resources are continuing to become available to help your agency deal with the impact of the coronavirus. Be sure to check the listserv emails for updates like:

- North Platte's plastic dividers between driver and the rest of the vehicle
- Midland AAA's personal protective equipment guidance
- CDC guidance for transit operators

We salute your ingenuity as you develop methods to keep your staff safe while protecting your riders and their families.

This situation is not just a healthcare emergency, but an economic issue as well. As federal authorities develop guidance for CARES ACT funding it will be shared with managers through the

listserv. Recent updates include:

- CARES ACT funding covers 100% for essential, incidental use of 5311 vehicles from January 20, 2020 for up to six months.
- Continue submitting agency invoices through the normal process. NDOT will make the adjustments for reimbursement with 100% funds.
- Managers may enter zero for local match unless their agency received eligible matching funds from other federal programs including Medicaid and Title XX.
- Agencies operating as usual and without any lost wages due to a reduction in service cannot claim lost wages for its employees.

If you think you missed guidance or tips, be sure to check Nebraska Public Transit's website for a list of COVID-19 Information and Resources under Transit Manager Resources. You will find information for transit agencies from the CDC, NDOT, National RTAP, APTA, and CTA.

Situations like COVID-19 bring out the best of us, and we want to highlight some of the ways agencies make us proud to be a small part of the Nebraska Public Transit family.

- **City of Tecumseh/Johnson County Public Transit**

have partnered with the local grocery store and Dollar General to make pick-ups and deliveries of food and necessary supplies.

- **KCTS** is offering grocery delivery across Kimball, Deuel and Cheyenne counties for only 50 cents.
- **From the Northeast Region to the Panhandle** agencies reported drivers volunteering to take fewer hours so those who need the shifts continue to get regular pay.
- **North Platte Public Transportation** switched to medical trips only to continue offering the most essential services rather than face a complete shut down.
- **Box Butte County Public Transit** also switched to essential trips, and has encouraged grocery trips on mornings when the local stores have special hours for at-risk populations.

At a time when public transit is experiencing low ridership, your innovations and commitment remind us why mobility is an essential service. Transit means everyone can get to the doctor, pick up food, go to work, and be a part of their community. Your agencies, your staff, your services make that possible – pandemic or not.

# Summer Fun with Driver Training

By Carrie Bartholomew

Due to the COVID-19 crisis that our nation is currently facing, the Nebraska Safety Center has decided to postpone all April and May transit manager and transit driver courses. Those courses, along with late March courses that were postponed, are being rescheduled for later in the year.

Transit managers should watch for emails regarding new dates for these courses. Anyone previously registered for postponed courses will remain registered once a new date is set. Please be aware we will follow CDC and state official recommendations. We are all navigating unknown territory and the date for “the next normal” is fluid, so we thank you for your flexibility.

If you have transit drivers that require training in the meantime, we do offer four online classes: New Driver Training (not a substitute for the 16 hours of training required for new drivers), ADA and Emergencies in Transit, Generations and Riders’ Needs, and Passengers and Service in Transit. Two of the four hours that drivers need annually can be fulfilled by participating in an online course.

The Nebraska Public Transit website contains links to the courses along with instructions on how to create an account and register for a course. Please direct any questions about online



The new exclusive course RIDE Simulator & Total Safety Check and Evacuation Strategies includes a simulation aspect that consists of real-world scenarios that provides solutions for real-time problems that operators face daily.

courses or course postponements to [bartholomewc@unk.edu](mailto:bartholomewc@unk.edu).

The Nebraska Safety Center is also excited to bring two exclusive classes for one week only this July! The courses, ADA Hot Topics and RIDE Simulator & Total Safety Check and Evacuation Strategies, will be presented in Scottsbluff on July 14, Kearney on July 15, and Lincoln on July 16.

ADA Hot Topics will cover key elements required by ADA in providing fully accessible bus and demand responsive services including: service animals, direct threat, denying riders with disabilities, and reasonable modification requirements. The presenter, Jess Segovia, has over 20 years of experience working for fixed route and ADA paratransit agencies. He now travels the country leading ADA compliance workshops and assists transit agencies in providing compliant, accessible public transit services.

RIDE Simulator & Total Safety Check and Evacuation Strategies

will cover preventive maintenance training and review operator health and well-being. This class addresses the necessity for a mechanically sound transit vehicle and for an operator that is fit to perform their safety sensitive duties. There is a simulation aspect to this class that consists of real-world scenarios that provides solutions for real-time problems that operators face daily.

The presenter, Lenzy, is a nationally certified training professional with 28 years of experience. He is also a two-time CTA National Rodeo Champion and Driver of the Year.

Due to popular demand for this course, we have added a morning class in addition to the afternoon class, but the morning course is limited to 10 seats. We encourage anyone interested in attending these courses to register ASAP!

Times, specifics, and more information for both courses are located on the transit manager portal.

## MOBILITY MATTERS

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**Public Transit**

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Good Life. Great Journey.

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### HIGHWAY LOCAL ASSISTANCE DIVISION

Jodi Gibson, Division Manager  
 Kari Ruse, Transit Liaison Manager  
 George Gallardo, Transportation Planner III  
 Wayne Masek, Transportation Planner III  
 Ken Rouch, Federal Aid Administrator III  
 Marisue Wagner, Federal Aid Administrator III  
 Linda Langdale, Federal Aid Administrator I



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 EST. 1978

Mick Anderson, Director  
 Kaitlyn Richardson, Rural Transit Manager  
 Mitchell Locken, Rural Transit Lead Trainer  
 Carrie Bartholomew, Program Assistant/Event Outreach Planner  
 Darla Morris, Business Manager  
 Erin Howard, Transportation Safety Manager



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**CENTER FOR PUBLIC  
 AFFAIRS RESEARCH**

William Bivin, Statewide Mobility Manager  
 Tara Grell, Graphic Designer  
 Matt Harrington, Communications Specialist  
 Chethan Miriyala, Software Developer  
 Josie Schafer, Director  
 Yu-Che Chen, Director, Global Digital Governance Lab  
 Jooho Lee, Associate Director, Global Digital Governance Lab  
 Melanie Kiper, Community Service Specialist

## Calendar of Events

### JULY

8 – 10:45am-12:45pm – Columbus  
 Dealing with Difficult Passengers

8 – 2:00pm-4:00pm – Columbus  
 Refresher Defensive Driving

8 – 8:30am-10:30am – Columbus  
 Refresher PASS

14 – 10:00am-12:00pm – Scottsbluff  
 ADA Hot Topics

14 – 12:30pm-3:00pm – Scottsbluff  
 RIDE Simulator & Total Safety Check & Evacuation  
 Strategies

15 – 10:00am-12:00pm – Kearney  
 ADA Hot Topics

15 – 12:30pm-3:00pm – Kearney  
 RIDE Simulator & Total Safety Check & Evacuation  
 Strategies

16 – 10:00am-12:00pm – Lincoln  
 ADA Hot Topics

16 – 12:30pm-3:00pm – Lincoln  
 RIDE Simulator & Total Safety Check & Evacuation  
 Strategies

21 – 9:00am-11:30am – Scottsbluff  
 Safety Management Systems Manager Training

### AUGUST

5-6 – NATP Transit Manager's Workshop – Kearney

6 – NDOT/NATP Technology Fair – Kearney

11 – 8:30am-5:00pm – Kearney  
 PASS (Bootcamp Day 1)

12 – 8:30am-5:00pm – Kearney  
 Defensive Driving (Bootcamp Day 2)

25 – 2:00pm-4:00pm – Kearney  
 Distracted Driving

25 – 10:45am-12:45pm – Kearney  
 Dealing with Difficult Passengers

25 – 8:30am-10:30am – Kearney  
 Refresher PASS

25-26 – NATP Roadeo – Kearney

**Check [nebraskatransit.com](http://nebraskatransit.com) for the  
 most up-to-date schedule of courses.**