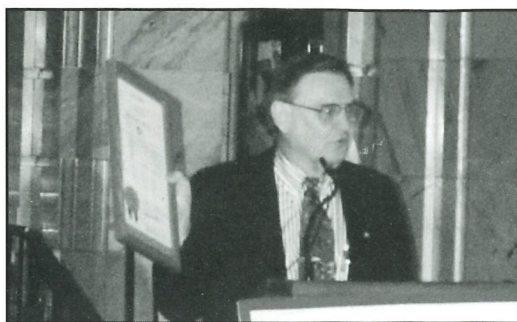


## Community Transportation Day: Kentuckians Seek State Funding for Public Transit



*Representative Tom Burch holds up Patton's Proclamation of Community Transportation Day.*

A crowd of 150 gathered in the state Capitol Rotunda on February 7th, which Governor Paul Patton proclaimed Community Transportation Day. People from all over the state came together to celebrate and to ask for an \$8 million funding initiative for Kentucky's public transportation. The crowd was made up mostly of elderly and disabled citizens who have to ride a public bus or van to get around. Some members of the gathering held signs that said, "How will I get to the doctor?" and "How will I get groceries?"

The event, sponsored by KPTA, helped to promote awareness about the plight of

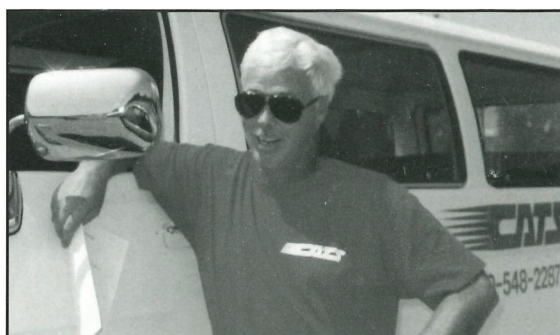
public transportation in the Commonwealth, brought about by federal cutbacks. The event also focused on the necessity for access to public transportation for all Kentuckians. In addition to the crowd of elderly and disabled citizens, over 35 public transit agencies were present to celebrate Community Transportation Day. Approximately 25 buses and vans from across the Commonwealth lined Capitol Avenue minutes before dawn. KPTA also featured an informational table in the Capitol Annex and met with state legislators



*KPTA President Beecher Hudson welcomes a crowd of 150 to the Community Transportation Day rally.*

*Continued page 3*

## Cats Driver & Dispatcher Assist Rider



*C.J. Current, dynamic and dedicated CATS driver.*

Before Christmas in 1995, CATS driver C.J. Current went to pick up a physical therapy client in Paris, but when he arrived, the man did not answer the door. Pam Shepherd, CATS dispatcher, was very concerned because the rider was always quite punctual, so she called the man's doctor and got his home phone number. When she called, the man was slurring and quickly dropped the phone. She could hear him breathing but got no further response.

Pam immediately sent C.J. back to the rider's home, where he got the mainte-

nance man to unlock the door. The client was conscious but was sitting in a daze, disoriented and incoherent. They quickly called an ambulance for the man, whose diabetes may have been the cause of the incident.

Driver C.J. Current commented, "I was so glad I was able to assist someone in need. The service is needed by so many different people, and sometimes we are the missing link. . . , going beyond the call of duty."

Susan Short, Operations Manager of CATS, echoed Current's opinion: "Because of the daily routine of this passenger, [our] dispatcher and driver knew something was questionable. We not only provide a valuable service to the community, but sometimes we become [some individuals'] only companionship." She went on to praise both C.J. Current and Pam Shepherd for their dedication.

Along with Short, our hats are off to C.J. and Pam for their quick thinking, which may have saved a life.



## From the Desk of the President

Dear KPTA members:

The first four months of my term as President have been hectic and exciting as we have planned some strategies and ideas that hopefully will help all transit-related agencies throughout the State of Kentucky.

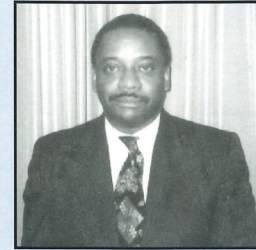
I am enthused by the way the various committees and members have worked together to tackle such complicated issues as state funding for public transportation, Medicaid transportation, CHR-Multi-Modal public transportation coordination, first time highway-public transit meetings, innovative marketing concepts such as brochures and a video on community transportation, and the Community Transit Day we had in Frankfort on February 7, 1996.

Our attorney and legislative lobbyist Oliver Barber and other members have been meeting with key members of the General Assembly and cabinet heads as we present our needs for public transportation in the State of Kentucky.

The KPTA membership must mobilize ourselves as we have never done before in order for us to survive the budget slashing that started at the Federal level and now has hit home locally with all of us.

We need everyone in the KPTA membership involved in our efforts and endeavors if we are going to move public transportation in Kentucky to the front of the bus both in terms of awareness and funding.

Beecher Hudson, KPTA President  
Director WHEELS Transportation  
Louisville Area Chapter, American Red Cross



## Snowstorm Wallops Kentucky Community Transit

The snowstorm that walloped the Northeast from Washington to Boston from January 6 through 8 also shut down some of Kentucky's rural transit systems. Local operating budgets took a big hit as well. In its wake, the storm left added costs for overtime to get transit service restored while taking a bite out of ridership.

Frankfort was one of the hardest-hit areas. According to Sue Jeffers, Frankfort's BUS Transportation Manager, "Part of our services were closed down for nearly a

week. The office was closed on Monday the 8th, and we had no service at all on the 8th or the 9th. On the 10th we resumed lim-

ited service: we could get to people in town, but we were unable to reach people in the rural areas until the following week.

They were really stranded." Jeffers went on to comment that "very few people wanted to come into town because the sidewalks and driveways were icy and dangerous. Many of our disabled and elderly riders stayed put. Needless to say, the storm highly impacted our service for twenty-five percent of the month."

Although most transit systems in the area were out of operation on January 8, Lexington Red Cross WHEELS did not shut down. The only part of their service that



Bluegrass Ultra Transport shuts down during major snowstorm.



Lexington Red Cross Wheels maintains service during snowstorm.



*Community Transportation Day Continued from Front*  
to create awareness about the hardships of community transit.

In his remarks to the crowd, Beecher Hudson, President of the Kentucky Public Transportation Association, stated that all of the [public transit] agencies are hurting, and the \$8 million sought is a "drop in the bucket when you consider what it pays for." According to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Division of Multimodal Programs, in 1995, public transportation provided more than 24 million passenger trips for Kentuckians. Further, over 1.8 million elderly and 800,000 disabled residents use public transit every year.

Jessie Thomas, 62, said she wouldn't be an independent person without LexTran, Lexington's mass transit service. LexTran enables Thomas to get to work and to the grocery. For a large number of the crowd of 150,

community public transit is a much needed lifeline service.

As the day came to a close, members of KPTA hoped that Community Transportation Day had an impact on legislators and will make a difference in the future of public transit.



*Buses and vans from across the Commonwealth lined Capitol Avenue on February 7th to celebrate Community Transportation Day.*

## Lextran Budget Requests More in Local Funding

The Lexington Transit Authority is asking the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government for a \$5.17 million operations budget and a \$3.55 million capital budget for Fiscal Year 1997.

In requesting this funding, LexTran General Manager Stephen Rowland said, "We hope the mayor and City Council will seriously consider granting this budget request. This is a realistic budget expectation for LexTran considering that 47 percent of our community were willing to raise taxes on themselves to provide for LexTran. Even negative voters were not against transit, but expressed that the money LexTran needs should come out of the current general fund."

Last November, residents by a 53 percent-47 percent margin voted against retaining an existing payroll tax of one-quarter percent, which expired last July. The ballot referendum called for dedicating the tax to the transit agency, which has cut service over the last several years.

The payroll tax, according to transit agency officials, would have generated \$9 million a year, enough to fund current operating costs, pressing capital needs, and service growth.

"This budget is necessary to put LexTran in a position of providing a viable transportation alternative for our community by providing the money needed for current operations and an investment in desperately needed new equipment for replacements and expansion," Rowland explained.

The budget request, which asks for \$5.05 million in local funding, is a \$2.92 million increase over last year's local funding. The LexTran board noted that the Urban

County Council had already set aside \$1 million for LexTran that could be used to fund the increase.

It was pointed out that the increase needed to stabilize the bus system would represent only 4 percent of last year's city budget of \$153 million.

The increased funding would provide money needed to make up a loss in federal funds from FY 1996 and enable LexTran to run full service on a 30 minute peak and 60 minute off peak frequency from 6 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

The \$3.55 million capital budget includes replacing eight of LexTran's 15-year-old 40-foot RTS coaches with smaller 30-foot buses; rehabilitating the remaining seven RTS coaches; purchasing seven additional 30-foot coaches to be used for expansion of service in FY 1998; and placing wheelchair lifts on 19 coaches. This would make LexTran fully accessible.

The budget request also includes a marketing budget to advertise changes in service and to continue the transit educational campaign started in 1995-1996.

In addition to increased funding from the Urban County Government, the budget includes an increase in LexTran's fare, from 80 cents to \$1, and a 5 percent increase in the University of Kentucky's funding allotment.

LexTran does not include expanded service in its operations budget request, because it currently doesn't have enough buses to handle route expansion.

*Taken from Passenger Transport Volume 54, Number 2. p. 2.*



## Foothills Express Adds New Vehicle to Transit Fleet



(Above) The Centurion Paratransit bus, the newest addition to the fleet at Foothills.

At the end of 1995, Foothills Express added a 1996 Champion-made Centurion Paratransit bus to its service fleet. Foothills' newest vehicle can transport up to 30 passengers and is designed to meet passengers' special needs. The bus is wheelchair lift equipped and can accommodate two wheelchairs at a time. According to Foothills Express Transportation Manager Kimberly Clay, "it is a major accomplishment for our transit agency to have obtained a vehicle of this size, and we hope that through its use we may provide a greater service to the community."

A variety of lifts, jumpseats, and tie down systems enhance passenger safety and comfort. Further, Centurion's heavy-duty diesel engine and unique Steel-Gard construction will provide Foothills Express with both dependability and safety. After acquiring the vehicle, Clay remarked, "Foothills Express is delighted to receive this newest addition to our service fleet."

## The 12th National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation

According to its organizers, the 12th National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation held in Des Moines, Iowa, on October 22-25, 1995, was a gathering that represents a crossroads for those who face a growing trend in Washington and state capitols to "... withdraw support for public transportation and services when the need for them is growing."

As pointed out in the conference announcement, expectations are that the next few years will be especially difficult for rural transit and intercity bus systems. Under that pretext, the conference promised to explore many of the issues that affect public transportation. Some of the topics addressed pertained to proposed changes in funding programs and implementation of federal regulations related to drug testing and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Other topics on the conference agenda focused on facility design, alternative fuels, GIS, and disaster planning and recovery.

In addition to a keynote address by the Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the event featured concurrent sessions that were designed to stimulate discussion among persons involved with rural transit operations and intercity bus service. Among those expected to attend were transit operations personnel, FTA staff, and other experts from around the country.

The Rural Transit Assistance Center staff was fortunate in being able to attend the conference. Sessions were generally informative and well-organized. The insights and the expanded perspective obtained from this diverse, nationwide gathering of transit-oriented people made it a rewarding trip.

*Taken from RTAC: The Newsletter of the Illinois Rural Transit Assistance Program, Fall 1995. p. 4.*

### *Snowstorm Continued from page 2*

was affected was the meals program, which was out of commission for two days. Transportation Manager Ed Brady stated that after a while, the snow became normal and drivers got used to it. The only real problems they had were getting stuck or getting blocked into driveways by snowplows. Brady remarked, "Usually before the tow truck got there, a good Samaritan in a four-wheel drive had come by and pulled us out, which saved us a lot of money in tow bills." WHEELS

remained in service (with delays) throughout the storm.

Despite the potential crippling effect of the snowstorm of '96, many transit providers were able to continue serving their riders. Since transit can be a lifeline to such services as dialysis, medical appointments, and grocery shopping, we applaud the hard work and dedication of the providers who braved the storm.



## Frankfort Area Transit Receives Five New Buses

The transit system of the City of Frankfort replaced all of its five 30-passenger capacity vehicles with five Ford Champion 15-passenger buses. Frankfort's new fleet went into service in December of 1995. One special feature of the new fleet is the bicycle racks placed at the back of all five of the new buses. Frankfort Transit will be sending out bid specifications to anyone who is interested in the large 30-passenger buses or spare parts.



For more information, please call Kay Brooks at 502-875-8565.

## Kentucky Rural Transit Assistance Program Committee Members

### Midwest Division

Bonnie Rhoads  
Transit manager  
Owensboro Transit System  
115 W. Fourth Street  
Owensboro, KY 42301  
502-687-8570

### Central Division

Mistianna Barnes  
FTSB  
1460 Newtown pike  
Lexington, KY 40511  
606-233-0066

### Northeast Division

Ray Young  
Maysville Transit System  
216 Bridge Street  
Maysville, KY 41056  
606-564-9411

### West Division

Mark Davis  
Purchase Area Development  
District  
PO Box 588  
502-247-7171

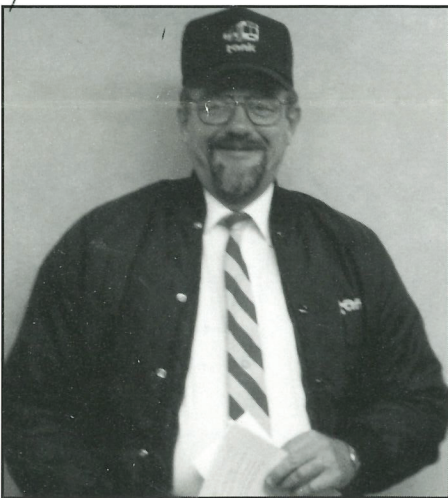
### Southeast Division

Shirley Cummins  
RTEC  
PO Box 746  
Mount Vernon, KY 40456  
606-256-9835

### State Level

Dallous Reed, RTAP  
Chairman  
Vickie Bourne, KY RTAP  
Coordinator  
Division of Multimodal  
Programs  
KY Transportation Cabinet  
125 Holmes street  
3rd Floor, State Office  
Bldg. Annex  
Frankfort, KY 40622  
502-564-7433

## TANK's Byrd Promoted to Manager



*New Special Services Manager Jerry Byrd*

Jerry's responsibilities as Manager of Special Services include handling scheduling issues and supervising RAMP services and proposed Medicaid transportation. He states that his first job will be to work on runs that are not carrying passengers and to ensure that each driver has an acceptable running time.

Byrd also says that he would like as much feedback as possible from drivers and other employees on changes: "Copies of any proposed changes will be posted well in advance so that everyone can look at them and give me their opinions as to whether or not the changes will work."

We wish Jerry well in his new position!

Supervisor Jerry Byrd was promoted to Manager of Special Services at TANK beginning January 20.

Prior to his promotion, Byrd, who has been with TANK since 1977, first worked as an operator, then as a trainer, and finally as a supervisor starting in 1993.

### KPTA Membership Don't Forget:

The next KPTA meeting is March 19, 1996 at BGCAA



## Cannon Honored with WAVE TV3 STEP Award

Louisville Red Cross WHEELS Volunteer Harry Cannon has been named a recipient of the 1996 WAVE TV 3 STEP Award. This honor is bestowed annually on those who have given Service Through Excellent Performance, a phrase which certainly describes Harry Cannon.

In 1983, Mr. Cannon began volunteering for the Red Cross as a WHEELS Driver three times a week. He drove a lift-equipped bus taking the elderly and the handicapped, including those in wheelchairs, to medical appointments. He cut back a little after his 80th birthday, but he still remains one of Transportation's most active volunteers. Mr. Cannon serves as the Chairman of the Transportation Advisory Committee, represents the ARC at meetings and conferences, assists with spe-

cial projects, drives once a week, and fills in whenever WHEELS needs extra help. In his spare time, Harry has helped the Disaster Department and continues to support other community organizations. He has been recognized by the Red Cross as the Transportation Department Volunteer of the Month and the Chapter's Volunteer of the Year. Last fall he was named the Outstanding Volunteer in Kentucky by the Kentucky Public Transit Association.

It is this type of dedication to helping others that has earned him the 1996 STEP Award and that makes the Red Cross extremely proud that he has chosen to be a part of the WHEELS Program. Dedicated volunteers like Mr. Harry Cannon are truly the lifeblood of the American Red Cross.

The KPTA newsletter is published for the Kentucky Public Transit Association by Federated Transportation Services of the Bluegrass with the financial support of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Division of Multimodal Programs and Rural Transit Assistance Program. Any comments or suggestions should be addressed to Mistianna Barnes, FTSB, 1460 Newtown Pike, Suite J, Lexington, KY 40511.



**Federated Transportation Services of the Bluegrass**  
1460 Newtown Pike, Suite J  
Lexington, Kentucky 40511