

KPTA

January
1999

NEWSLETTER

Plattner hired as Executive Director for the Office of Transportation Delivery

The Kentucky Public Transit Association would like to welcome Margaret Spencer Plattner to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC). Plattner has been hired as Executive Director for the Office of Transportation Delivery. She began her duties on December 16, 1998.

Plattner comes to KyTC from the Teen Tobacco Enforcement Program's Director with Kentucky Department of Alcohol Beverage Control. She was a liaison with the public and other state governmental agencies to strengthen the Teen Tobacco Program; recruited of teens to conduct investigations; and coordinated with the Governor's staff on teen tobacco policy

She worked two years as a legal research analyst. Plattner spent four years on active duty with U.S. Navy as a Lieutenant and was stationed at the Naval Security and Investigative Command in Washington D.C. as a Foreign Counter-intelligence Analyst. This position entailed acting as the Navy's point of contact with the U.S. Intelligence Community on terrorism matters in the African region. She also worked as an Analyst and writer, assigned critical African portfolio (including Libya, Egypt, and South

Africa). Plattner served two years in U.S. Navy Reserves as a Lieutenant Commander. Her duties included working as an Intelligence Analyst summarizing Latin American Submarine Activity. She

supervised the loading of military equipment on cargo ships destined for the Middle East during the Persian Gulf Conflict. Also, she received a National Service Ribbon for service during Operation Desert Storm.

Plattner's educational background includes:

➤ B.A. in Political Science from

Continued on Page 7



Margaret Plattner new Executive Director for the Office of Transportation Delivery.

Reorganization for Division of Multimodal Programs

The Division of Multimodal Programs has been reorganized. As of December 16, 1998, the Public Transit and Human Service Transportation Delivery Branches will be removed from the Division of Multimodal Programs and elevated to the Office of Transportation Delivery.

Margaret Plattner will be the Executive Director of the Office of Transportation Delivery. Vickie Bourne will remain as the Branch

Continued on Page 8

FTSB New Address

Send Newsletter Information To:

694 New Circle Rd. NE, Suite #33, Lexington, KY 40505

606/233-1668 (FAX)

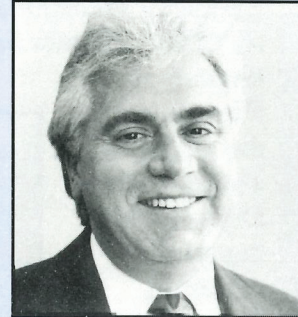
EMail ftsbshep@gte.net

From The Desk of The President

Dear KPTA Members:

THE GAMEPLAN

As I mark the 25th anniversary of the start of my professional career, I find myself more energized than ever. Make no mistake about it; the future is bright for community transportation. The need is there and as current trends continue, such as the aging of the population, increasing concern about air quality and accessing jobs, the importance of what we do will continue to grow.



We must pursue our collective missions in a customer-responsive, yet cost-effective manner. The balance between providing what the customer wants or needs and staying within budget is a delicate and precarious one. That is precisely why I am excited about the leadership Governor Paul Patton has provided under Empower Kentucky.

For 25 years, I have listened to countless discussions about coordinating services and pooling resources. Governor Patton has actually done it. He, along with the Legislature, has taken a dramatic step by focusing the various sources of community transportation funding under the direction of the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. Community transportation has been further emphasized and elevated by other changes within the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, such as the creation of the Office of Transportation Delivery. We welcome Margaret Plattner, that office's new Executive Director, and offer our support and cooperation.

It is tremendously encouraging to see the resources committed to moving Kentuckians being consolidated and increased. But the opportunities for improvement are endless: over 150,000 families in Kentucky remain without automobiles, while more than 40% of the community transportation fleet is older than its useful life.

Here's another opportunity for improvement. I recently had a conversation with a captain from our fire department who was looking for relief from people misusing Emergency Medical Services. He related receiving a call from a gentleman who, when EMS arrived, was sitting on the front porch, bag packed, needing a ride to the Veterans Administration Hospital. The result was a \$60-\$90 trip versus a \$1 bus ride, or \$15 cab ride. Certainly, we are wrestling with a complex situation with multiple budgets, but the bottom line is that public dollars were wasted because the need and resource were mismatched. If we could only coordinate and integrate our resources.

Tremendous opportunities abound with people working together, applying increasing innovation in both technology and organizational approach. We can rise to meet the challenge of providing the service our customers, and all the people of Kentucky, need and want. Thank you, Governor Patton, and welcome, Margaret Plattner. I look forward to spending the next 25 years (or so) working together to embrace the challenges before us.

J. Barry Barker, KPTA President
Executive Director
Transit Authority of River City (TARC)

1998 -- A Year in Transit

A Phenomenal Legislative Year for Transit

The year 1998 was a phenomenal legislative year for the federal transit program. The Congress passed and the President signed into law the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, a major victory for the federal transit program. Congress subsequently completed action on the Fiscal Year 1999 appropriations bill consistent with TEA 21.

Following is a chronology of transit legislative activities over this year.

ISTEA Top Agenda Item Early On

The second session of the 105th Congress kicked off in January with the reauthorization of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act a top agenda item. ISTEA expired on Sept. 30, 1997, but the Congress adjourned in November without passing an ISTEA reauthorization bill. The Congress did pass a short-term ISTEA extension measure, keeping surface transportation programs authorized through March 31, 1998.

President's Budget Included NEXTEA Recommendations

In February, the Clinton Administration submitted to Congress a Fiscal Year 1998 budget that recommended funding the transit program at \$4.78 billion, about 1.4 percent below the FY 1997 level of \$4.84 billion. The budget proposal assumed the enactment of major transit program changes contained in the Administration's National Transportation Efficiency Act reauthorization proposal.

In the proposal, urbanized areas could use formula funds for preventive maintenance activities and all formula funds could be used for capital or operating purposes in UZAs with fewer than 200,000 people.

The Administration recommended folding the Bus Discretionary Program into the urbanized Area Formula Program and shifting the Fixed Guideway Modernization Program into the Formula Program. In addition, the Administration proposed a new Access to Jobs program to help former welfare recipients get to jobs or training needed to enter the workforce.

ISTEA Reauthorization Heats Up

In March, with the expiration of the ISTEA short-term measure fast approaching, ISTEA reauthorization efforts heated up. On March 12, the Senate passed its ISTEA reauthorization bill, S. 1173, by 96 votes to 4. The Senate earlier, on March 10, voted 96-4 to add the Banking Committee's transit reauthorization bill to S. 1173.

The Senate bill included APTA's proposals to define preventive maintenance as a capital expense and to allow urbanized areas with fewer than 200,000 people to use all formula funds for capital or operating needs. Several senators were prepared to offer state transit minimum allocation amendments, but they were withdrawn.

Key to passage of the Senate bill was the addition of \$5 billion in general funds to the transit program added by U.S. Sens. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), Paul Sarbanes (D-MD.), Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-N.M.), and ranking member Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.). In total, the Senate bill authorized \$41.3 billion for transit in FY 1998-2003.

House Action

On March 24, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unanimously approved its version of ISTEA reauthorization, H.R. 2400, the Building Efficient Surface Transportation and Equity Act. The committee approved an

amendment, offered by Bud Shuster (R-Pa.), chairman of the committee, which authorized highway demonstration projects, transit New Starts, and transit bus projects. BESTEA authorized \$181.6 billion for highways and \$36.7 billion for transit in FY 1998-2003. It removed the Highway Trust Fund, including the Mass Transit Account, from the unified federal budget.

Troublesome Amendments Defeated

On April 1, the House passed BESTEA by a vote of 337 to 80; few changes were made to the version approved by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. During floor debate, an amendment sponsored by Rep. Lindsay Graham (R-S.C.) to eliminate \$18 billion for all transit New Start project funding, all transit bus discretionary project funding and all highway demonstration projects was defeated 79-337.

Another amendment, sponsored by Rep. John Kasich (R-Ohio), that would have reduced the federal gasoline tax from 18.3 cents per gallon to 7.4 cents per gallon over four years and would have eliminated all Mass Transit Account funding for transit as well as much of the federal highway program was defeated 98-318.

The stage was now set for a conference committee to work out differences between the House and Senate bills. The House bill authorized \$37.3 billion for transit programs and \$181.6 billion for highways in FY 1998-2003 and took the Highway Trust Fund "off budget." The Senate's ISTEA 2 legislation provided \$172.8 billion for highways and \$41.3 billion for transit over the same period.

TEA 21 Approved: Major Victory for Transit

House and Senate conferees met during late April through mid-May attempting to work out a final ISTEA reauthorization bill. A major sticking point was how to ensure that the funding levels authorized for highways and transit would actually be provided in the annual appropriations process. This dilemma was resolved when the House and Senate leadership and the Administration agreed to "guarantee" a set amount of funding in the reauthorization bill, an unprecedented provision.

On May 22, the House and Senate approved a final bill, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. This bill contained record funding for transit and highway programs. The Senate passed the conference agreement on an 88-5 vote, and the House subsequently approved the same measure by 297 votes to 86. The President signed the bill at a special White House ceremony on June 9.

TEA 21 represents a major victory for the federal transit program. It fulfills key transit industry goals, including the highest possible transit funding; increased funding for all transit program components; preventive maintenance as an eligible formula expenditure; small urbanized area transit agencies permitted to use all formula funds for capital or

TANK Express service transported to PNC Bank's Festival of lights at the Cincinnati Zoo

The Transit Authority of Northern Kentucky (TANK) began a special service for the 1998 holiday season. TANK, for the first time in history, took Northern Kentucky residents to PNC Bank's Festival of Lights at the Cincinnati Zoo.

The new service began on Saturday, November 21, and experienced steady numbers for each weekend. TANK rode Northern Kentuckians to the Zoo from four Park & Ride locations throughout Northern Kentucky, each Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening, through January 3.

"The demand for this special holiday service had risen from a severe lack of parking at the Cincinnati Zoo combined with a general frustration with driving. Local construction projects were creating long hours on the roads and our public has realized that it is much more enjoyable to let someone else do the driving."

Legislative News

The new session of Congress has begun, but no legislative business is expected until the first week of February.

Until then, the various Congressional committees are holding their organizational meetings, and some are beginning substantive action (for instance, the House Transportation and Infrastructure committee already has reported out an aviation bill, which is expected to be that committee's major legislative activity this year).

**Be Watching
for Exciting
Information
about the
1999 KPTA
Annual
Conference**

REGULATORY NEWS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

There have been a number of small changes to the Department of Transportation's various drug and alcohol testing regulation. On January 5, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued a rule change that requires all vehicle maintenance personnel in urban transit systems to be included in the drug and alcohol testing program (contracted rural maintenance personnel continue to be exempted).

A December 14, 1998, notice maintains FTA's 1999 rates for random drug and alcohol testing at their 1998 levels. On December 8, 1998, FTA issued a notice allowing post-accident drug or alcohol tests administered by local law enforcement personnel to be used to satisfy to the FTA regulatory requirement. For more information on any of these, contact FTA's Judy Meade at (202) 366-2896, or visit FTA's Internet site, www.fta.dot.gov.

A December 10, 1998, FTA notice now allows recipients of all FTA capital grant programs to use their grant funds to lease capital assets, if leasing is more cost-effective than purchase of a capital asset. For more information, contact FTA's Office of Program Management.

LexTran Drivers sing night -- bus blues -- sort of

LexTran returns its popular ad campaign

They're back, and this time they have a choreographer.

Dipping into an advertising well that worked once before, LexTran is back on the air with commercials that feature the singing bus drivers who played a big role in the bus agency's resurgence two years ago.

"It was extremely popular last time," said Jenny Williams, LexTran's marketing director.

"Over the last year, people kept asking 'Where are the singing bus drivers?' So we brought them back."

Two years ago, the then-struggling bus agency reshuffled its service and for the first time launched a well-funded advertising campaign to boost ridership.

The TV ads featured six actual bus drivers, who sang, danced and hammed it up in hopes of persuading people to use the revamped bus service.

They were a big hit.

The service changes and advertising blitz helped fuel a jump in ridership and put the bus system back on the road. Not to mention that the musical drivers won four national advertising awards.

In the new ads, which ran on TV and radio, six bus drivers -- including two who appeared in the original commercial-- don sunglasses and sing and dance in Motown style.

Titled "LexTran After Dark," the ads are meant to promote the agency's new night service, which keeps buses on the road until 1:00 a.m., as well as improvements such as bike racks on the buses. The ads should get plenty of play -- LexTran spent \$45,000 on air time.

The melodious drivers expect the new version to be as popular as the originals.

"I guess you could say we're all local movie stars," said bus driver Beverly Caise, who appeared in the ads two years ago and is back in the new incarnation.

Caise and others said the new spots are a bit different than the originals, which featured little more than the drivers singing in an empty recording studio.

This time, they sing and dance on a darkened stage, with special-effects-style lighting and *Men in Black* sunglasses.

"We even had a smoke machine this time," Caise said.

And there was another change. In the original ads, some of the singing drivers started a spontaneous dance, twirling their fingers above their heads while singing the ad's refrain of "We'll be around."

This time, they had professional help -- a choreographer from the University of Kentucky.

"Three of us couldn't

even dance," said bus driver Joseph Moore, who also returned from the original commercials. "The choreographer worked with us the best she could."

The singing drivers said they expect to get some good-natured ribbing over the ads, both from co-workers and riders. But the feedback is always positive, said driver Harold Adams.

Adams said he was in McDonald's the day the new ads began running, when some workers there recognized him.

"They all asked if we really have that much fun driving the bus," he said.

Added signing driver Stefan Lewis, who's worked at LexTran for five years: "I'll do anything I can to fill the seats."

The other drivers in the ad are Lisa Orndoff and Andrew Driver.

Williams said the bus agency will get another boost when nine new buses hit the streets. The buses cost \$245,000 each and were purchased through a federal grant.

"These are the first buses we've had in 11 years that haven't been ridden on before," Williams said. "They even smell new."



LexTran new advertising campaign features Singing Bus Drivers.

1998*Continued from Page 3*

operating needs; preservation of ISTEA's federal-state-local partnership; and retention of ISTEA's flexible funding provisions.

But perhaps best of all are the unprecedented provisions designed to guarantee funding for the highway and transit programs at significant levels through FY 2003. Uniquely, Title VII of TEA 21 provides "offsets" in discretionary spending, which means the guaranteed levels are already "paid for" under congressional budgetary rules. In short, the intention of the provision is to assure that in each year's appropriations process the funds identified as guaranteed for transit and highways are in fact made available for those programs.

TEA 21's transit program, authorized at \$41 billion with a guaranteed funding level of \$36 billion, represents at least a 50 percent increase and, if fully funded, as much as a 70 percent increase over appropriated funding in the six years of ISTEA.

Appropriations Follow TEA 21

In July, both the House and Senate passed bills setting FY 1999 transit funding at the \$5,365 billion level guaranteed in TEA 21. Both measures provide a 10.8 percent increase in the formula program above current funding. While funding for transit and highways was increased to the levels guaranteed in TEA 21, funding for the Coast Guard, Federal Aviation Administration, and Amtrak was cut below the administration's request.

TEA 21 Corrections Law Signed

Also in July, the President signed the internal Revenue Service Reform bill, which included a bill making technical corrections to TEA 21. Among other things, the technical corrections bill made minor changes to the New Start authorization levels and clarified a number of project authorizations.

Omnibus Appropriations Measure

After the August congressional recess, the transportation appropriations bill got tied up in election year politics. The transportation bill was ultimately rolled into a \$500 billion omnibus appropriations measure. H.R. 4832, a bill containing several appropriations and policy measures. After several continuing resolutions, the bill was approved by the House on Oct. 20 by a vote of 333 to 95. The Senate approved the measure on Oct. 21 by the margin of 65 to 29. President Clinton signed the bill into law on Oct. 21.

Appropriations Measure Above TEA 21 Guarantee

The final measure set transit funding at \$5.39 billion, \$25 million more than the \$5.36 billion level guaranteed in TEA 21. This represents an 11.3 percent increase above the FY 1998 funding level of \$4.84 billion.

The funding levels for the formula, capital, and other programs equal the "guaranteed" funding levels authorized in TEA 21. The \$25 million above the guarantee was provided for the access to jobs program.

Congress adjourned without acting on pending legislation to reauthorize the Rail Safety Act and the Surface Transportation Board, both of which will be on the congressional agenda during the year ahead.

Taken from Passenger Transport, Vol. 56, No. 50, P. 4.

By Kip Banks

Empower Kentucky Regions

Region 1 - Not active at the present time

Region 2 - Pennyryle Allied Community Services, Inc. -- Begins Service April 1

Region 3 - Audubon Area Community Service, Inc. (GRITS) -- Begins Service April 1

Region 4 - Not active at the present time

Region 5 - Not active at the present time

Region 6 - Awarded to Yellow Cab of Louisville, Inc. (Tentative start date May 1, 1999)

Region 7 - Louisville Red Cross - Begins TANF and Medicaid May 1, 1999

Region 8 - Bluegrass Community Action Agency (BUS) -- Began TANF October 1 & will begin Medicaid March 1

Region 9 - Yellow Cab Inc. of Newport -- Begins Medicaid in Owen County and TANF in all counties on March 1 & Begins remainder of the service on April 1 except in Carroll County

Region 10 - Federated Transportation Services of the Bluegrass, Inc. (FTSB) Began TANF November 1 & will begin Medicaid March 1

Region 11 - Kentucky River Foothills Began TANF November 1 & will begin Medicaid March 1

Region 12 - Rural Transit Enterprise Coordinated, Inc. (RTEC) -- Began TANF October 1, Medicaid in all areas except Rockcastle January 1, & Medicaid in Rockcastle March 1

Region 13 - LKLP Community Action Council, Inc. -- Began TANF and Medicaid November 1 except in Jackson, Clay & Harlan (Clay and Harlan began Medicaid on January 1 and Jackson will begin March 1)

Region 14 - Sandy Valley Transportation Services, Inc. -- Began TANF & Medicaid June 1

Region 15 - Not active at the present time

Region 16 - Licking Valley Community Action Program -- Began TANF September 1 & Medicaid January 1

KPTA Annual Conference Fall of 1999 Paducah, Kentucky Join the Planning Committee All Volunteers Welcome

Plattner hired as Executive Director

Continued from Page 1

- Denison University in Granville, Ohio;
- M.A. in International Relations from The Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.; and
- Law degree from Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law.

Plattner's community activities includes:

- Board of the Kentucky Commission on Women;
- UN World Conference/NGO Forum on Women in Beijing, China;
- Author of a University of Kentucky Law Review Article on Beijing, Conference,
- 1992 Delegate to the Democratic National Convention; and
- Big Sister Program in Washington D.C.

Plattner feels her political experiences will be a great asset to her new appointment. She said she has always accepted a challenge and feels this position will be quite rewarding. Plattner believes in the concept of Empower Kentucky and looks forward to navigating the program in the right direction.

She is looking forward to establishing a good working relationship with the transit providers. On a personal side Plattner enjoys

travel, reading, photography and spending time with her family. She also is planning to become a first time parent in the near future by adopting a baby girl from China.



Merlene Davis, Columnist for the Lexington Herald-Leader, was the guest speaker at FTSB's Annual Meeting. Davis spoke from the side of a welfare recipient and how transit providers can better deal with the KTAP participants.

Reorganization

Continued from Page 1

Dallous Reed will be retiring January 29, 1999 as the Branch Manager of the Human Service Transportation Delivery Branch. Bourne will report directly to Plattner.

Public Transit and Human Service Transportation Delivery will no longer be under the authority of the Office of Intermodal Planning and John Carr. With "Office" status, the Office of the Transportation Delivery will report directly to the Cabinet's Deputy Secretary of Administration.

The physical location of the Office of Transportation Delivery will remain the same (3rd Floor, State Office Building Annex, 125 Holmes Street). The telephone number will also remain at (502) 564-7433. The fax number will change in the future, but can be accessed at (502) 564-4422.

Thought for the Day
*"The difference
between 'involvement'
and
'commitment' is like
an eggs-and-ham breakfast;
the chicken was 'involved'
- the pig was 'committed'."*

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 Pam Shepherd, FTSB, 694 New Circle Rd., NE, Suite 33, Lexington, KY 40505.



Federated Transportation Services of the Bluegrass
694 New Circle Rd., NE, Suite 33
Lexington, KY 40505