



AS THE WHEEL TURNS

Spring 2012

By Paul Davis



Jennifer Woodall and I attended the American Public Transit Association's (APTA) legislative conference in Washington, DC. As in years past, we met with congressional leaders and their staff. We were able to meet in person with Senators Manchin and Rockefeller, Congresspersons Rahall, Capito and McKinley were not available, but assigned key staff personnel to meet with us.

Reauthorization of the transportation bill known as “SAFETEA-LU” was the main item on our agenda. As you may recall, the bill expired in FY 2009. Congress passed a Continuing Resolutions (CR) to fund the program through March 31, 2012.

Both the Senate and House have versions of the transportation bill. The House Bill HR 7 has had some serious push back from the transit industry. It is proposed to be a 4 to 5 year bill. The Senate Bill SR 1813 closely



resembles the current bill that currently funds highways and transit. The Senate Bill could be an 18-month to 2-year bill.

This was an extremely busy time for the Senate side of the house. The Senate was bringing their transportation bill to the floor and they were actively voting on 23 amendments while we were there visiting. Senator Rockefeller was so busy that he met with us in his office at the Capitol. They were voting on an amendment every 17 minutes so he could not leave the floor, but for just a few minutes at a time. He really went out of his way to talk to us this year. One of the amendments on the floor created a 100 Bus Exemption so that small urban transit systems can continue to use the grants for capital or operating assistance. Other amendments included insuring that there would be capital funds to help small urban and

rural systems have funding to replace buses and do building maintenance.

On the House side, the bill has had a lot of opposition mainly due to the fact that the bill proposed that transit be removed from the Highway Trust Fund. That means there would be no dedicated funding for transit and we would be at the mercy of funds coming from the general fund each year. As with many of you, APTA and CTAA wrote letters opposing this proposal. We were told as of right now there are over 300 amendments to the house bill.

On March 15, 2012, the Senate passed their version of the Transportation Bill 74-22. The 100 Bus Language was included, but slightly modified to include up to 75% for systems operating less than 75 peak buses and 50% for systems 75-99.

Although the Senate passed their bill, it appears as if the House is planning to continue working on HR 7. We were hopeful that they would adopt the Senate's bill in conference, but seems unlikely.

Performance Report

Ridership for the month of January is up by 15,118 customers. The Dial-A-Ride ridership had an increase of 458 customers too. The bus side of the system increased by 14,618 customers. As for year-to-date statistics, bus ridership is up 73,203 trips or 15% and Dial-A-Ride is up 500 or .029%. Although we have not finalized the reports for February, it looks like we will continue to show strong ridership for that period too.

The cost of operation in January 2012 was \$57,779.26 more than in January 2011 and \$56,369.81 less than budgeted. Year-to-date operating expenses have increased eight percent and are seven percent below budget.

Operating revenue in January was \$14,656.87 more than in January 2011 and \$16,024.16 more than budgeted. Year-to-date revenue is \$70,156.83 over FY 2011 and \$85,933.01 more than budget.

New Faces



I would like to welcome the following people to the TTA Team. Since it's has been awhile since, we recognized new employees, I going to go back a few months to get the new people that we missed. Starting with the

Dial-A-Ride operators, **Dean Fuller, Robin Lusher, Stephanie Holman and Brooks Johnson. Lonnie Bledsoe, Steen Hughart and Gene Bragg** all joined the TTA family as bus operators.

JOKES



The Brake Breakdown

Sherry was exasperated with her younger sister, who bought an unreliable car and called for a ride every time it broke down.

One day Sherry got yet another one of those calls.

"What happened this time?" she asked.

"My brakes went out," her sister said. "Can you come to get me?"

"Where are you?" Sherry asked.

"I'm in the drugstore," her sister responded.

"And where's the car?"

"It's in here with me."

Humorous Signs

In a Department Store: Bargain Basement Upstairs.
In an Office: Would the person

who took the step ladder yesterday kindly bring it back or further steps will be taken.

In another Office: After coffee break, would staff please empty pot and stand upside down in the sink.

In a Safari Park: Elephants Please Stay In Your Car.

At a Conference: For anyone who has children and doesn't know it, there is a day care on the first floor.

A Leaflet: If you cannot read, this leaflet will tell you how to get lessons.

On a Repair Shop Door: We can repair anything (Please knock hard on the door - the bell doesn't work.)

A Frog Tale

A male frog goes to a psychic. The psychic tells him, "You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you."

The frog becomes excited, "This is great! Will I meet her at a party?" "No," says the psychic, "in her biology class."



Milestones

YEARS OF SERVICE

Deborah Bryan-Bator	28
Stella Fowler	27
Jim Forto	26
Larry Collins	25
Curtis Hodges	25
Roger Kipp	25
Mark Hunt	25
Jeff Heintz	24
Paul Davis	23
Chuck Boggs	21
Robert Patrick.....	21
Fredrick Adkins.....	21
Danny Stanley	18
Jim Pine	18
Albert Thomas.....	14
Julian “Lee” Spires.....	14
Roger Camp.....	13
Renee Mullins	12
Greg Kipp.....	12
Scott Stultz	12
Dianna McCallister	12
John Smiley	12
James Howerton	11
Robert King	11
Thomas McRae	10
Shaun Upchurch	10
John Webb.....	9
Randy Rodriguez.....	9
Janie Fraback.....	8
Brian Frazier.....	8
Donnie Tiller	8
Carole Holbrook.....	7
Peggy Miller.....	7
David Mannon.....	7
Norman Andrews	6
Ben Martin.....	6
James Edmonds	5
Jeffery Connor.....	4
Denny Wheeler.....	4
Keith Murdock	4
Ronald Thomas	4
Cathy J.Craighead	4

DuVaughn Hale.....	4
Mary Marcum	4
David Budd	3
Michael Dickerson	3
Mary Gold	3
Darrell Price	3
Donnie Adkins	3
Randall Waller	3
Steven Kunges.....	2
James Williamson	2
Lonnie Black	2
Tom Day	2
David Banks.....	1
Mark Taylor	1
Jennifer Woodall	1
Brenda Wells.....	1
Jason Mullens.....	1
Scott Williams.....	1
Casey Steele	-
Craig Miller.....	-
Howard Curtis	-
Timothy Ferguson	-
John Scott.....	-
Ronald Miller	-
Randy Mullins.....	-
Dean Fuller.....	-
Robin Lusher.....	-
Lonnie Bledsoe	-
Stephanie Holman	-
Steven Hughart.....	-
Donald McKenzie	-
Brooks Johnson	-
Gene Bragg	-

Birthdays Aren't They Great?

March 2012 Birthdays

Renee Mullins.....	03/01
Cathy J. Craighead.....	03/01
Thomas Day	03/01
Robert King	03/13
Jeffery Connor.....	03/13

Jennifer Woodall.....	03/15
Ronald Thomas.....	03/18

April 2012 Birthdays

Frederick Adkins.....	04/03
Brenda Wells.....	04/03
Mark Hunt.....	04/13
David Budd.....	04/17
Jason Mullins	04/20
Curtis Hodges	04/24

If you should see these folks on their special day, please wish them a Happy Birthday.

Jeff's World



By Jeff Heintz

An Inspiration

It happened week after week for over a year. It was a pattern and as far as I was concerned this woman owed me an explanation. No matter the time of the day she was constantly going about her job; wiping down tables, vacuuming the floors, cleaning windows, wiping up spills and picking up papers. That was her job but she didn't stop there. She habitually approached every table and asked the customers if there was anything else they needed,

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be it napkins, straws or refills on their drinks.

We’re talking FAST FOOD here, not some fancy Italian restaurant where they charge four bucks for a refill on your water. The service was so unusual I just had to talk with her for a few minutes. As was her custom, she “worked” her way over to our table. She looked to be in her late 60’s and was about half my height. Dynamos frequently come in small packages. She climbed up and down her little step ladder at least a dozen times during our visit. I observed her on her hands and knees reaching under tables to get the little scraps of paper that her broom couldn’t quite pick up. She made eye contact with every customer as she cheerfully asked “can I get you anything?” If they didn’t need anything she would quickly add, “if you need anything just holler.”

I complimented her on her work habits. I told her that from what I had seen, she clearly was going above and beyond the call of the duties for which she had been hired. I asked her for the secret to her work habits. She smiled and humbly replied “this is part of my witness for the church I attend but mainly I do it because I just like people.” She explained how she loved to meet new people every day as much as she enjoyed her regular customers. It told her

that I had never once seen her slip and have a bad day. She said things like; “that’s just me ... I suppose I have my down days but I don’t want anyone else to see it ... I’m just like anyone else, I wish I could work a few more hours and make a little more money but the economy is in such bad shape I’m just grateful to have a job ... I’ve been with them for over 13 years now and they have been awful good to me.”

It’s fun to watch a professional work. They are so accustomed to detail that they take for granted the high quality of work that they routinely put out. We’ve grown accustomed to the great job that Debbie Bator, Stella Fowler and Larry Collins do every day. Their customers love having them for a regular driver and they get upset when they change runs on the markup. I was pleased to see that many of their work habits have filtered down to some of our newest employees.

I recently had the pleasure of observing David Banks and Randy Mullins go about their duties as bus operators. With absolutely no prompting from me; they greeted every customer that boarded the bus, made all of their stop announcements, pulled all the way into the curb to board customers, lowered the kneel for every customer whether they asked for it or not, stopped for “potential” customers that were standing

near the corners, politely answered all questions and called dispatch for the answers they couldn’t supply.

Good service almost never receives a compliment but good service never goes unappreciated. During one of my recent rides a customer pulled me aside and made sure to tell me that both of his regular drivers were not only great drivers, they were great people too!

We gave over 900,000 rides over the last 12 months and answered seemingly just as many phone calls. What are people saying and thinking about you?

Shop Talk



By Danny Stanley

With the changing of the bus routes on March 5, the seven buses returning to the garage between 7:00 PM and 8:00 PM will enter the west gate to circle around the rear of the building to approach the fuel pump. This will eliminate the confusion trying to get all of the buses on the lot. This also allows enough room for any Dial-A-Ride vans and the two 8:00 PM buses returning to the garage to enter the east gate while the Maintenance Department employees are on lunch from 8:00 PM to 8:30 PM. The Maintenance

Department wants to thank the drivers for their cooperation with these changes.

On March 5, Donald McKenzie finally was able to transfer from Dial-A-Ride over to the Maintenance Department. The delay was due to getting enough qualified drivers in Dial-A-Ride so Donald could transfer to fill the cleaner position. Please join the Maintenance Department in welcoming Donald and if you happen to see him be sure to introduce yourself.

From the Chief



By Scott Stultz

OPEN ENROLLMENT

Once again, it's time for PEIA's annual Open Enrollment. The Open Enrollment for the new plan year will run from 1 April 2012 to 30 April 2012. The coverage that you select during this period will be effective on 1 July 2012.

By the end of March, you will receive the annual *Shopper's Guide* from PEIA that provides a detailed discussion of your options. There are many changes to the insurance options and

coverage amounts during the upcoming year. I will briefly cover a few of the major changes here, but I recommend that you carefully review the *Shopper's Guide* before making your insurance decisions.

There will be several changes to the coverage amounts and co-payments for active employees. Most of the co-payments for services such as Urgent Care services, emergency room visits, physical/occupational therapy, and non-preferred prescription drugs will **increase**. In addition, PEIA will be offering a new plan - Plan D. Plan D will only be available to WV residents, and it will only cover services performed by WV providers. It is similar to PEIA Plan A, but it will not cover out-of-network services (not even at a higher cost to the employee). There are emergency exceptions in Plan D (for example, if you are injured while out of state on vacation), but the plan will not cover regular medical care that is provided outside of the state.

The changes discussed above will not apply to Medicare retirees. Most of the Medicare retiree coverage co-payments will not change in the new plan year. However, Medicare retirees will see a premium increase to offset this lack changes. I will discuss the rate increases later in this article. Since TTA does not administer the retiree

insurance coverage, it would be best for retirees with questions regarding their coverage to either contact their provider directly or attend one of the PEIA benefit fairs.

If you participated in the Improve Your Score (IYS) program last year, then you will be receiving an affidavit from PEIA to continue it during the upcoming year. If you participated in the living will program last year, you will NOT be required to do anything this year to continue the discount. If you wish to join either the IYS or the living will programs, then you should contact PEIA to get started. Note that TTA will not have the forms needed to participate in these programs, so they must be obtained directly from PEIA. In addition, you need to let me know if you choose to participate in one of these programs because we will not receive a list of participants from PEIA.

There will be changes in some of the health and life insurance rates in the upcoming year. For active employees, there will be no change in the PEIA health insurance rates for the upcoming year. However, there will be changes (some increases and some decreases) to most of the optional life insurance rates. A list of the health insurance rates for the upcoming year will be posted in the dispatch office as soon as they are available from

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PEIA. The revised life insurance rates will be printed in the *Shopper's Guide*. Please consult these items before making your final insurance enrollment decisions.

For retirees, most health and life insurance rates will increase. Retiree health rates will increase by an average of 9%. In addition, there will be increases in the monthly costs for most life insurance coverage options effective 1 July 2012. I will send out individual letters to all retirees with the new rates as soon as I get the revised rates from PEIA.

PEIA will continue to use the online open enrollment this year that it started using a few years ago. You will not receive an Open Enrollment Change Form in the mail unless you contact PEIA and request one. Furthermore, you will not be required to complete a Change Form UNLESS you are making a change to your current coverage or tobacco status.

Obviously, there are too many changes to the insurance options for me to list here. That is why it is so important for you to review the *Shopper's Guide* before making your coverage decisions. There will be toll-free numbers and websites listed on the back of the *Shopper's Guide* for you to use if you have additional questions regarding your options.

Finally, PEIA will host benefit fairs throughout the state again this year to answer your insurance-related questions. A full listing of the fairs' times and locations will be in your *Shopper's Guide*. The fair in Huntington will be at the Holiday Inn next to Pullman Square (and across the street from the Civic Arena) on 12 April 2012 from 3:00PM to 7:00PM. Please plan to attend the benefit fair if you have any questions about your insurance coverage.



By Fred Adkins

Just Saying.....

I ran across an interesting quiz on the web, and I thought I would share it with you all. You do not actually have to take the quiz, but just read straight through it, and you will get the point.

Quiz # 1

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the first five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest.

4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last six Academy Award winners for best actor or actress.
6. Name the teams who have won the World Series for the last ten years.

The point is, none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners. Here's is another quiz. See how you do on this one.

Quiz # 2

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel, appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

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6. Name a few heroes whose stories have inspired you.

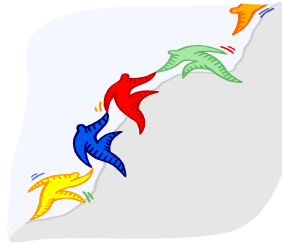
This quiz is a lot easier because the people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money, or the most awards. They are the ones that care.

A lot of people really get into watching celebrities, or famous people, that is why all these reality shows are so popular now. But I for one hate these shows because these people do not impress me at all. I have found that the best people on the planet are those who are humble and are always looking for someone that they can help or assist.

Don't get me wrong, if you like looking up to sports stars, Miss America, movie stars and undeserving recipients of some prize or award, go ahead, knock yourself out. I myself will look up to real people that keep this country going. A good friend or neighbor, the fire fighters, the men and women that serve in the military, the police officer that puts his life on the line. And not only them, but the person that always give you a smile or ask do you need some help. The people whose homes were destroyed in the recent tornado. They picked themselves up and starting helping each other right away.

So I guess I'M saying that the people who impress me are

the normal folks that work hard every day to be a productive part of my world. God bless the working man. So Donald Trump, you're fired, I don't need you. I have real friends that love me for who I am. What more could you ask for. Just Saying.....



Dispatcher's Corner



By Janie Fraback

Wow, what great weather we have had all winter! We had a few rough spots but nothing too bad. So spring has sprung in the Tri-State a little early, so it seems.

Along with spring time comes vacation time and extra recreation. With the gas prices going up and down we are all looking for ways to save at the pumps. Some are buying better fuel efficient vehicles, riding bicycles, motorcycles, car pooling when possible, making every trip count, and taking public transportation. Whatever it is that you can do

to help with the fuel usage helps all of us in the long run. Not only does it help out by being “green” and not using our resources; it also helps our economy and puts some of that fuel budget back in our pockets. With warmer weather there are also more people out and about, especially children.

So let's all try to remember that kids will be kids and be extra vigil with our driving and safety habits.

Editor's Corner



By Jennifer Woodall

STRESS

Is there anyone who doesn't have stress in their lives? All of us, at one time or another, feel stress. Stress is the particular feeling that's created when we react to particular events in our lives. It's the body's way of rising to the challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus, strength, stamina and alertness. The events we experience are called stressors. The body responds to stressors by activating the nervous system and certain hormones. The hormones speed up heart rate, speed up breathing, increase your blood pressure and your metabolism. Your blood vessels open up to pump

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more blood through your body into the large muscles to put your muscles “on alert.” The pupils in your eyes dilate so you can see better. Your liver releases stored glucose to increase your body’s energy. All of these things work together to help you quickly and effectively handle the pressure at the moment.

The body is made to go into this “flight or fight” mode for brief periods and when the stressor is over, allowed to cool down and calm down. Some people, who may not have good coping skills, however, can stay in the “fight or flight” mode for long periods of time or for some, everyday, all day.

Some stress can help to motivate us so we can get things done like meeting a deadline at work or completing jobs around the house. When we get these things done, we feel good and our bodies return to a relaxed state. Other stress like going through a divorce, dealing with the death or serious illness of a loved one can cause stress that lasts longer.

Long-term stress can take a toll on our bodies and minds. We can begin to have health problems like high blood pressure, shoulder, back and neck pain, and stomach problems just to name a few. Over time, stress weakens our immune system and can cause us to get sick more often. It can also be a cause for

depression and can worsen diabetes and make you irritable with others. Do you think you have good coping skills? Some coping skills that you might already use or find helpful include:

1. Don’t try to be perfect. Don’t expect others to be perfect.
2. Avoid caffeine, nicotine, alcohol and other non-prescribed drugs.
3. Eat a balanced diet.
4. Get enough sleep and rest.
5. Learn to relax through deep breathing, Yoga, or meditation.
6. Moderate exercise can help to reduce stress.
7. Have someone you can talk to. Talking keeps you from bottling up your stress.
8. Watch what you’re thinking. Try to look at things positively rather than on the negative side.
9. Solve little problems as they come up rather than let them pile up and overwhelm you.
10. Know when to ask for help.

If you’re feeling overwhelmed, your Employee Assistance Program is here to help you. You can call Debbi

Parsons at St. Mary’s Medical Center for an appointment. It’s private and confidential. You may reach Debbi at 304-526-6675.

Intelligent Transit Funding

The WV Division of Public Transit has made a proposal to assist with funding for state fiscal years 2013-2015 (July 1, 2012 – June 30, 2015). WVDPT proposed to fund half of the estimated operating cost (\$250,050.00) through the JARC Program. The other half of the estimated operating cost would be provided equally by TTA, Kanawha Valley Regional Transit Authority (KRT) and the State costing each agency \$27,784 per year for a total of \$83,350 over the next three years.

The “iT” bus to Charleston carried an average of 32 people per day during the month of February for a total of 672 passengers. KRT carried 712 passengers.

During our March meeting, the TTA Board approved the acceptance of the proposal made by the WV Division of Public Transit for continued operation of the iT Service, contingent upon KRT’s acceptance of the same proposal.

