

# AS THE WHEEL TURNS



Spring 2013

## Annual Legislative Visit

By Paul Davis



The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) annual Legislative Conference was held in Washington D.C. early in March this year. The conference is attended by hundreds of mass transit leaders from across the Nation joined by the suppliers of equipment and services for the transit industry. I attended along with TTA Assistant Manager, Jennifer Woodall, and representatives from other WV transit systems.

This is a particularly critical year for the conference. The legislation that provides federal funding for TTA and mass transit systems throughout West Virginia and the USA has undergone major changes this year.

At the conference, we heard from people like the U.S. Secretary of the Department of Transportation and the chairman of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. **Congressman Nick Rahall** (D-WV) is the Democrat who is second in seniority on that committee and in a powerful position to influence authorization.

On the final day of the conference we went to “The Hill” and met with our elected officials to remind them of the importance of mass transit services in West Virginia and the elements in upcoming legislation that will have the greatest impact on promoting and expanding our transit operations “back home.” We were able to meet in person with **Congressman Rahall** and **McKinley**. **Senators Manchin, Rockefeller** and **Congressperson Capito** were not available, but assigned key staff personnel to meet with us.

Reauthorization of the transportation bill known as “MAP 21” and the TMA were the main items on our agenda. As you may recall, the bill is a 2 year term bill and will expire in FY 2014.

All agreed that this was a great time to discuss reauthorizing mass transit legislation. Why? The Country has four major challenges facing it today. They are the economy, the environment, energy independence and the quality of life in America. TTA is representative of most transit systems in our ability to help the Country address all four of these challenges.

TTA is all about jobs and economic development. Customers ride our buses and “Dial-A-Ride” for one or two major purposes –

to earn money or to spend money. Neither happens if you can't get from here to there. TTA helps reduce the pollution that is created by automobiles. Imagine how much more carbon would be in our air if the 931,071 trips on TTA last year had made instead in single occupant automobiles! Think as well of how much fuel is saved by all the TTA customers who board a bus instead of turning the ignition switch on or calling a taxi. It is now widely accepted that mass transit will play a key role in reducing our nation's dependency on foreign oil.

Finally, is the most personal role TTA plays in the communities we serve. Customers who cannot drive can still go where most everyone else goes for entertainment, socializing, shopping, health care, education and the marvelous array of services available to the residents of the tri-state area. Customers who choose to drive less or not to drive at all have a choice.

Our time has come. Thank you to all who read our newsletter for the role that you have played in getting TTA where it is today.

### **Transportation Management Area (TMA)**

TTA continues to meet with the KYOVA Interstate Planning

Commission to work out the details of the Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) on the funding splits. There has been some progress in getting the Designation of Recipient status for each transit system. KYOVA's Policy Board has passed a resolution authorizing the systems to request the designation from the governors of each State. The next step is to negotiate the funding split with the three transit systems

### **Performance Report**

Ridership for the month of January is down by 2,462 customers. The Dial-A-Ride ridership had an increase of 671 customers too. The bus side of the system decreased by 3,133 customers. As for year-to-date statistics, bus ridership is down 727,733 trips or 5% and Dial-A-Ride is up 1229 or .07%.

The cost of operation in January 2013 was \$12,865.64 more than in January 2012 and \$44,948.66 less than budgeted. Year-to-date operating expenses have increased one percent and are eight percent below budget.

Operating revenue in January was \$11,777.03 more than in January 2012 and \$15,700.19 more than budgeted. Year-to-date revenue is \$48,428.40 over FY 2012 and \$56,062.41 more than budget.

## **JOKES**



### **A Card For The Bus Driver**

It was Christmas time, and the school kids had all given their bus driver cards and presents. The bus driver was truly feeling that the kids must really like his driving to be so generous.

The bus driver waited until he was home from work, and then started to open the cards.

On the inside of one card it said, "Thanks for not getting into an accident yet. We really appreciate it."

### **The Wisdom of Children**

#### **Banking Lessons**

The teenage son was having trouble mastering the fine points of balancing his new checking account.

"The bank returned the check you wrote to the sporting goods store," his mother said.

"Oh good," he replied, "Now I can use it to buy some stereo equipment!"

#### **A Father's Value**

A father and his small son were standing in front of the tiger's cage at the zoo. The father was explaining how ferocious and strong tigers are, and junior was taking it

*“Safety Is No Accident”*

all in with a serious expression.

Dad," the boy said hesitantly, "if the tiger got out of his cage and ate you up..."

"Yes, son?" his father said expectantly.

"What bus would I take home?"

**Milestones**

**YEARS OF SERVICE**

Deborah Bryan-Bator .....	29
Stella Fowler .....	28
Jim Forto .....	27
Larry Collins .....	26
Curtis Hodges.....	26
Roger Kipp.....	26
Mark Hunt.....	25
Jeff Heint.....	25
Paul Davis .....	24
Chuck Boggs .....	22
Robert Patrick .....	22
Fredrick Adkins.....	22
Danny Stanley .....	19
Jim Pine.....	18
Julian “Lee” Spires.....	15
Renee Mullins .....	13
Greg Kipp.....	13
Scott Stultz.....	13
Dianna McCallister .....	13
John Smiley .....	13
Robert King.....	11
Thomas McRae .....	11
Shaun Upchurch.....	10
John Webb.....	10
Randy Rodriguez.....	10
Janie Fraback.....	9
Brian Frazier .....	9
Donnie Tiller .....	8
Carole Holbrook.....	8
Peggy Miller.....	8
David Mannon.....	7
Norman Andrews .....	7
Ben Martin .....	7

James Edmonds.....	6
Jeffery Connor.....	5
Denny Wheeler.....	5
Keith Murdock .....	5
Ronald Thomas .....	5
Cathy J.Craighead .....	5
Du Vaughn Hale.....	5
Mary Marcum.....	5
David Budd .....	4
Michael Dickerson .....	4
Mary Gold .....	4
Donnie Adkins .....	4
Randall Waller.....	4
Steven Kunges.....	3
James Williamson .....	3
Lonnie Black .....	3
Tom Day.....	3
Mark Taylor .....	3
Jennifer Woodall .....	2
Brenda Wells.....	2
Scott Williams.....	2
David Banks .....	2
Donald McKenzie .....	2
Craig Miller .....	1
Howard Curtis .....	1
Timothy Ferguson .....	1
John Scott .....	1
Ronald Miller .....	1
Randy Mullins.....	1
Dean Fuller.....	1
Robin Lusher.....	1
Lonnie Bledsoe.....	1
Steven Hughart.....	1
Brooks Johnson .....	-
Gene Bragg.....	-
Kimberly Templeton .....	-
Grace Taylor.....	-
Jamie Morris.....	-
David Ball .....	-
Alan Roach.....	-
Mike Hamiton .....	-



***Birthdays  
Aren't They Great?***

**February 2013**

Randy Mullins.....	02/05
James Edmonds.....	02/07
Janie Fraback.....	02/10
Gene Bragg.....	02/11
John Webb .....	02/18
Shaun Upchurch.....	02/23

**March 2013**

Renee Mullins .....	03/01
Cathy J. Craighead ....	03/01
Tom Day .....	03/01
Kimberly Templeton .	03/03
Robert King.....	03/13
Jeff Connor.....	03/13
James Williamson ....	03/14
Jennifer Woodall .....	03/15
Ronald Thomas .....	03/18
Mark Taylor .....	03/21
Alan Roach.....	03/26

**April 2013**

Fredrick Adkins.....	04/03
Brenda Wells.....	04/03
Mark Hunt .....	04/13
David Budd .....	04/17
Curt 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

With apologies to Alfred, Lord Tennyson ... “In the spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of *baseball*.” I’ve always wanted to do a story involving baseball. Baseball fans appreciate the parallels of the game and the intricacies of a life’s journey. The immediacy of life is epitomized in the constant one on one battles you face in a game.

When you come to the plate, it’s just you against the pitcher. Everything is focused on the outcome of this meeting. One will succeed and one will fail, a short span of time will reveal the winner. Neither man can show weakness, lest his opponent seek to take advantage. Similarly, as a batted ball approaches a fielder’s mitt, a billion thoughts race simultaneously through his mind. In an instant, decisions are made which will determine whether a catch or an error is made.

How do the really good ballplayers do it? Practice, practice, practice and more practice. I loved to play third base ever since I was a little boy. I tried to emulate my favorite

Pittsburgh Pirate, Richie Hebner. The problem was that I played third base like a hockey goaltender. Get in front of it, knock it down, let it bounce off my face but never let it get by you. Coaches always told me, “keep it in front of you and you will always have a play.” Not very pretty, but effective none the less. How did I improve? I found a hard rubber superball and tossed it against a brick wall for an hour or two every day. Getting hit in the face forced me to catch it with my mitt or run the risk of losing all my teeth.

In my life, no matter where I’ve been or worked, I’ve managed to find at least one person to admire and emulate. Without fail, they have all employed the same mindset that I tried to bring to the ball field. They wanted to be the best and they never stopped trying to be the best. Most of them possessed a modicum of natural ability or intelligence but they managed to use what God blessed them with and stood out amongst their peers.

As you step up to the plate in your workday, what thoughts do you bring with you? Will you face down your opposition or will you concede the day to your doubts and fears? If you have weaknesses in your life, your adversaries (doubt and fear) will always seek to exploit them. Weaknesses like muscles

can be strengthened. Admitting to yourself that you have a weakness, is the first step in the process of making it a strength.

In baseball they call it a mindset, in the workplace they call it an attitude. It can be good or it can be bad, YOU are the one who makes that final determination. Baseball is a game of endless drills which come together to make you a complete player. In life, there are endless drills that you can subject yourself to that will make you a better person and a better employee. The most fundamental drill that you can put yourself through is to SMILE. A smile is like an avalanche, it starts slow but picks up steam and becomes a powerful, unstoppable force. A smile is infectious and will spread, but it has to start with you. Have you ever looked at the faces of ballplayers on a winning team? Everyone is smiling. Which came first, the chicken or the egg? Which came first the winning or the winning attitude? I say it’s a winning attitude. A winning attitude starts in the heart of a person who will not be denied the right to have a beautiful day! I don’t care if Justin Verlander is pitching.



## *“Safety Is No Accident”*

### Choices

By Fred Adkins



Willie is the kind of guy you love to hate. He is always in a good mood and always has something positive to say. When someone would ask him how he was doing, he would reply, “If I were any better I would be twins!” He was a natural motivator. If an employee was having a bad day,

Willie was there telling the employee how to look on the positive side of the situation.

Seeing this style really made me curious, so one day I went up to Willie and ask him, “I don’t get it! You can’t be a positive person all of the time. How do you do it? Willie replied, “Each morning I wake up and say to myself, you have two choices today, you can be in a good mood or ... you can be in a bad mood. I choose to be in a good mood.” Each time something happens, I can choose to be a victim or ... I can choose to learn from it. Every time someone comes to me complaining, I can choose to accept their complaining or ... I can point out the positive side of life.

I choose the positive side of life. ‘Yeah right, it’s not that easy,’ I protested. “Yes, it is” Willie said.

Life is all about choices. When you cut away all the junk, every situation is a choice. You choose how you react to situations. You choose how people affect your mood. You choose to be in a good mood or a bad mood. The bottom line is: It’s your choice how you live your life.” I reflected on what Willie said. Soon hereafter, I left the tower industry to start my own business. We lost touch. But I often thought about him when I made a choice about life instead of reacting to it. Several years later, I heard that Willie was involved in serious accident, falling some 60 feet from a communications tower. After 18 hours of surgery and weeks of intensive care, Willie was released from the hospital with rods placed in his back. I saw Willie about six months after the accident. When I asked him how he was, he replied, “If I was any better, I’d be twins. Want to see my scars?” I declined to see his wounds, but I did ask him what had gone through his mind as the accident took place. “The first thing that went through my mind was the well being of my soon –to-be born daughter, “Willie replied. Then as I lay on the ground, I remembered that I had two choices: I could choose to live or ... I could choose to die. I chose to live. I asked “weren’t you scared? Did you lose consciousness? Willie continued, “The paramedics were great. They kept telling me I was going to be fine. But when they wheeled me into the ER and I saw the

expressions on the faces of the doctors and nurses, I got really scared. In their eyes, I read “he’s a dead man”. I knew I needed to take action.” ‘What did you do? I asked. “Well, there was a big burly nurse shouting questions at me, “said Willie. She asked if I was allergic to anything. Yes, I replied.’ The doctors and nurses stopped working as they waited for my reply. I took a deep breath and yelled, ‘Gravity’.” Over their laughter, I told them, “I am choosing to live. Operate on me as if I am alive, not dead!” Moral of the story: every day of your life you make many choices, some affect only you, some, affect others. Bad decisions have destroyed lives’, companies, marriages, And Jobs. So remember every time you make one, try to go to the positive side and not the negative. Think about it!!

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### SHOP TALK



By Danny Stanley

As TTA’s fleet gets older, the cost of repairs increases. TTA’s 2003 model Gillig buses are reaching 345,000 miles and in the past six to eight months, the Maintenance Department has replaced (3) rear-ends on those models. Also, we have replaced some major components on the ISL

## “Safety Is No Accident”

Cummins engine which would be (2) Caps fuel injector pumps on the 2003 model and (2) injector pumps on the 2009 model Cummins engine. We recently finished replacing a head on the injector pump on Bus 1760. Back in March, the Maintenance Department had to replace the Catalyst filter in the muffler system on one of the 2009 model buses at a cost of around \$7,000. Our Dial-A-Ride vans are no exception to requiring major repairs. Recently we have had to replace the transmission in (2) of our vans. As we all can tell, the cost of keeping our fleet in good running condition comes at a high price, but bottom line, the Maintenance Department at TTA is fortunate to have the experienced mechanics and cleaners we have to keep our buses safe and clean for the public.

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### From the Chief



By Scott Stultz

### Congratulations

We would like to send our congratulations to **Corey and Grace Taylor** on the birth of their daughter, Peyton Elizabeth Taylor, on 25

January 2013. Peyton was 20 ½ inches long and weighed 7 pounds 1 ounce. Grace is a Dial-A-Ride Dispatcher.

Tyler Davis, son of Paul and Sandy Davis, is this year's winner of the Belle and Lynam Jackson Competition at Marshall University.

Tyler plays Tuba and is a junior at Marshall University majoring in Music Education. The Belle and Lynam Jackson Competition, considered to be the premier event of its kind at Marshall, was in early February. This is a yearly event in which the contestants are evaluated by outside adjudicators and screened in three rounds: preliminaries, semi-finals and finals. The outstanding performer is awarded a monetary prize and will also give a recital, which will be April 6 at 8 p.m. in the recital hall at Smith Music Hall at Marshall University. Congratulations Tyler!

### 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 2013 to 30 April 2013. The coverage you select during this period will be effective on 1 July 2013.

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

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

The good news is that the rates for active employees will not change for the upcoming year. The rate that an active employee is currently paying will be the rate he/she will continue to pay after 1 July 2013 (assuming he/she does not make any coverage changes during open enrollment).

The most-prominent announcement this year is related to the tobacco-free discounts. ALL employees and retirees must re-affirm their tobacco-free status during the month of April 2013. In addition, you will NOT be able to use the paper affidavits we have used in the past to confirm your tobacco-free status. Instead, you will need to call the Open Enrollment Help Line (number listed in the *Shopper's Guide*) and confirm your tobacco-free status. Failure to make this call will automatically result in the revocation of your tobacco-free status (and an increase in your monthly premiums). You can begin calling the PEIA number to confirm your tobacco-free status on 1 April 2013.

There will be several changes to the retiree rates and coverage options in the upcoming plan year. There will be new retiree plans available and different rates for each of them. I do not have the space

## “Safety Is No Accident”

to discuss all of the changes, but PEIA is sending out a letter to retirees that will describe those changes. I would **HIGHLY** recommend that all retirees attend one of the Benefit Fairs offered by PEIA during April. Counselors will be on hand during the meetings to discuss all of the changes with you. They have been through specialized training to understand and explain all of the changes.

There will also be some changes in the optional life insurance options. PEIA will be adding a new level of dependent life insurance benefits for active employees (not for retirees). The new level will be \$40,000 for spouse and \$15,000 for each dependent child. If you wish to increase your dependent coverage, then you will need to obtain the evidence of insurability form from PEIA and complete it to request the increase in coverage.

Another life insurance change is that active employees will be able to increase their optional life insurance coverage one level if there are any qualifying family events during the plan year. This is an added benefit to employees this year.

At this time, PEIA does not plan to have an open enrollment period for optional life insurance coverage. However, you may increase your coverage at any time if you wish to go through the evidence of insurability process.

Next, 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 wish to join either the IYS program, 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. 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.

In addition, the Health Plan (HMO) has added a new option (Plan C). Currently, no TTA employees are using the HMO plans, but the information about their changes are available in the *Shopper's Guide* if you are interested in looking at those options.

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. However, you **MUST** update your tobacco-free affidavit during the month of April to receive the discount in the new plan year.

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 Big Sandy Superstore Arena on 18 April 2013 from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM. Please plan to attend the benefit fair if you have any questions about your insurance coverage.

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## Editor's Corner

By Jennifer Woodall



## At The Capital SB 188

Representatives from the WV Public Transit Association attended the Senate Health and Human Services Committee meeting March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013.



*“Safety Is No Accident”*

J Carter, General Manager of Potomac Valley Transit Authority (pictured above) presented to the Committee the Association’s concerns regarding Senate Bill 188.

Senate Bill 188 states that the Secretary of DHHR shall develop a vendor transportation program for the transportation of Medicaid clients to covered services. In essence it will bring a Broker into the state to manage the non-emergency medical transportation for DHHR in an effort to reduce waste and fraud, the majority of which occurs with “friends and family”.

In an effort to preserve valuable resources, **Senator Kirkendoll** (Logan County) introduced the amendment which would allow public transit programs receiving funding from the State or Federal Transit Administration for the purpose of providing general public transportation to contract with the transportation vendor but are not required to do so in order to provide non-emergency transportation services to Medicaid recipients. As well, Ambulances licensed under the provisions of the Emergency Medical Services Act in Chapter 16, Article 4c of WV Code may transport Medicaid clients but shall not be included in the vendor transportation program. The

Committee also included Senior Service Centers to the amendment.

**Senator Evan Jenkins** (Cabell County), also weighed in asking Cynthia Dean (DHHR) if the Department has an issue with the quality or cost for services provided by public transit. Ms. Dean responded that the Department does not have a problem with the quality or cost of service provided by public transit.

The amendment passed the committee vote and was referred on to the Senate Finance Committee. As of the date of this article, the bill has yet to be brought up in the Finance Committee.



Our construction project continues to move forward. We are very excited to be within a month or so of moving in. The ductwork and electrical work are nearly complete. All of the drywall is up and the second floor is ready to be painted. Once the painting is complete the contractors will begin with the drop ceiling and overhead lighting. We are anxious to see the exterior of the building start coming together much like the interior has.

We are expecting to hold a grand opening celebration early this summer.



Renee Mullins will be leaving TTA soon. Renee is retiring after 14 years as an Operator. Renee has made her presence felt among customers as well as co-workers. She strives to create an upbeat, friendly and energetic environment. Renee will be missed as part of the TTA Team. We wish her luck in all her future endeavors.



## Annual Picnic

Save the date !! It’s hard to believe....but it is time once more to begin planning our Birthday Celebration.

This year, as with the past several, we will be holding our annual employee picnic at Camden Park. We will have the picnic on Sunday, July 14, 2013 and we plan for lunch to be served promptly at 1:00 p.m. with prizes to follow immediately after.