



AS THE WHEEL TURNS

Winter 2016

History of the Levies



By Paul E. Davis

It's official! The City and the County levies for TTA will be on the ballot on May 10, 2016. Most of TTA's current employees were not here when the levies were first approved by the voters in 1982. This is a brief history of the levies.

First of all, let's understand what an excess levy is. Under the West Virginia Constitution, local governments have the authority to tax real and personal property. However, the level of taxation that can be approved by elected local officials is limited. Any taxes levied in excess of the limitation must be approved by the voters for a specific purpose. To further protect the tax payers, an "excess levy" cannot be approved by a simple majority. It

takes 60% of the total votes cast to pass an excess levy. Before the levies were approved for TTA, the manager and the Board members lobbied the City Council and the County Commission each year to include TTA service in their budgets. The Authority sought financial help from both the City and County as they had been partners in the creation of TTA. From 1974 to 1981, each had contributed about \$150,000 each year for TTA operations. TTA annual operating costs were around 1 million dollars back in those days.

Two things happened in the early 80's that threatened to park the TTA buses. The Federal government ended a revenue sharing program that provided significant dollars to local governments to spend as they wished. With that, the City reduced TTA funding. The State of West Virginia placed the Cabell County jail in receivership until the County Commission could get it out of debt. The County responded by terminating all TTA funding.

However, the City and the County both agreed to place excess levies on the ballot for the voters to decide whether or not bus service was important enough to vote to increase their taxes.

The political stories and the lessons learned from the 1982 "Save the TTA!" campaign are another story for another day. Suffice it to say, our community decided it wanted a second chance at TTA transit service with 69% of the voters in the City and the County voting for the TTA levies.

Excess levies were limited to 3 years until 2006. In 2002, the voters of West Virginia approved a constitutional amendment to allow excess levies to be approved for 5 years. With time limits on the TTA levies, they have had to be renewed by the voters in eight more elections since the first one in 1982. The lowest vote was 67% by the City voters in 1984. The highest vote was 83% by the County voters in 1995. The TTA levies approved by the voters in 2010 expire on June 30, 2017. The

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elections this year are our last opportunity to renew the levies without paying for an expensive special election.

The levies will be on the ballot at the very same rate that they have been since 1982 and for 5 years if they are approved. The voters will be deciding on whether or not to continue the same tax that they have been paying for 33 years. Voters who live inside the Huntington city limits can vote twice for TTA - “early and often,” as we are fond of saying. Cabell County voters who live outside of the City, vote once for TTA. As we were able to “Save the TTA” in 1982, our campaign slogan in the renewal elections ever since has been, “Don’t Miss the Bus. Vote for the TTA! There is double meaning here. The TTA levy is always on the last page of the ballot. TTA is out of service without the levies.

TTA Awards Dinner

TTA’s Annual Award’s Dinner was held on Sunday, December 6th. Employees and their guests joined us at the 4-H Camp for a celebration and a superb meal.

In addition to the fine meal and fellowship, TTA presented the following

people their Safety and Attendance awards.

Safety Awards

NAME	# YEARS
Robert Patrick	25
Greg Kipp	15
John Smiley.....	13
David Mannon	10
Lonnie Black.....	5
Don McKenzie	2
Tony McCoy	1

Safe Driving

NAME	# YEARS
Mark Hunt.....	22
Lee Spires	13
Robert King	12
Ben Martin	9
James Edmonds	9
Cathy Craighead	6
Donnie Adkins	6
Randy Rodriguez	5
Steve Kunges.....	5
Keith Murdock	4
Mary Marcum	4
David Budd.....	4
Casey Steele.....	4
Howard Curtis	4
John Scott	3
Scott Williams.....	2
Tim Ferguson	2
Keith Dickman	1

Dial-A-Ride

DuVaugh Hale.....	7
Jeff Conner.....	7

ATTENDANCE AWARDS

Drivers

- Mark Hunt
- Donnie Adkins
- David Banks
- Ben Martin
- Casey Steele

Maintenance Department

- Jim Forto
- Tom Day
- Greg Kipp
- David Mannon
- Tony McCoy

Staff

- Paul Davis
- Jennifer Woodall
- Jeff Heini
- Brian Frazier
- Janie Fraback
- Tyrus Master
- Dianna McCallister
- Danny Stanley
- Scott Stultz
- Norman Andrews

Congratulations to all the winners. Thanks again for a job well done



Milestones

YEARS OF SERVICE

Deborah Bryan-Bator	32
Jim Forto	30
Curtis Hodges	29
Mark Hunt	28
Jeff Heinel	28
Paul Davis	27
Chuck Boggs	25
Robert Patrick.....	25
Danny Stanley	22
Julian “Lee” Spires.....	18
Greg Kipp.....	16
Scott Stultz	16
Dianna McCallister	16
John Smiley	16
Robert King	15
Randy Rodriguez.....	13
Janie Fraback.....	12
Brian Frazier.....	12
Donnie Tiller	11
Carole Holbrook.....	11
David Mannon.....	11
Ben Martin.....	10
Norman Andrews	10
James Edmonds	9
Jeffery Connor.....	8
Denny Wheeler.....	8
Keith Murdock	8
Ronald Thomas	8
Cathy J.Reed.....	8
DuVaughn Hale.....	8
Mary Marcum.....	8
David Budd	7
Donnie Adkins.....	7
Randall Waller.....	7
Steven Kunges.....	6
Lonnie Black	6
Mark Taylor.....	6
Tom Day.....	5
Jennifer Woodall	5
Brenda Wells	5
Scott Williams	5
Casey Steele	5

Howard Curtis	4
Timothy Ferguson	4
John Scott.....	4
Randy Mullins.....	4
Donald McKenzie	4
Gene Bragg	3
Brooks Johnson.....	3
David Ball	3
Nick Preston.....	2
Tony McCoy	1
Tyrus Masters.....	1
Nick Smith	1
Lonnie Bledsoe	-
David Browning.....	-
Darrell Chattfield	-
Tina Long	-
Mark Collins	-
Keith Dickman	-
Tammy Hicks.....	-
Rebecca Wright.....	-
Brian Keyser	-
Erin Weston.....	-
Nathaniel Stewart.....	-
Donald Frye.....	-
James Scyoc	-
David Issacs	-
Crystal Phillips.....	-



February 2016 Birthdays
Aren't They Great?



Randy Mullins.....	02/05
James Edmonds.....	02/07
Janie Fraback	02/10
Gene Bragg	02/11
Keith Dickman.....	02/11



March 2016 Birthdays

Cathy J. Reed	03/01
Thomas Day.....	03/01
Nick Smith.....	03/01
Robert King.....	03/13
Jeff Conner.....	03/13
Tony McCoy	03/14
Jennifer Woodall.....	03/15
Ronald Thomas	03/18
Mark Taylor	03/21

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



JOKES



The Golf Game

"How was your game, dear?" asked Jack's wife Tracy. "Well, I was hitting pretty well, but my eyesight's gotten so bad I couldn't see where the ball went," he answered. "but you're 75 years old, Jack!" admonished his wife, "Why don't you take my brother Scott along?" "But he's 85 years old and doesn't play golf anymore," protested Jack. "But he's got perfect eyesight. He would watch the ball for you," Tracy pointed out. The next day Jack teed off with Scott looking on. Jack swung and the ball disappeared down the middle of the fairway. "Do you see it?" asked Jack. "Yup" Scott answered. "Well, where is it?" yelled Jack, peering off into the distance. "I forgot," exclaimed Scott.

A young apprentice optometrist recently got careless and got his hand caught in the lens grinder. He wasn't seriously hurt, but he certainly made a spectacle of himself.



Jeff's World

By Jeff Heintl



Jeff's World It's That Time of Year Again

Once again we were treated to a mild December. Our hopes of a snowless winter however were quickly dashed this month. As I write this article the folks with the weather service are forecasting an icy mix. Well what are we going to do? We can't send it back, so we'll just have to deal with it.

The first snows force us to steel ourselves for what lies ahead. For the uninitiated, wintertime is TTA's time to "shine." When I'm out in the public I constantly hear people exclaim, "I don't know how you all do what you do in this kind of weather!" The answer is quite simple, the veterans teach the newbies and together we work together to provide the safest, most reliable and affordable transportation in the region.

I've been with TTA for going on 30 years. That's a long time in anyone's book. The journey has been filled with experiences, hard learned lessons and acquired common sense. There is a biblical expression that goes something like, "there is nothing new under the sun." This is

certainly true in the transit industry. For all of the wonders of technology that we have come to rely upon, there is no substitute for the experience and skill of the driver who sits behind the wheel of a TTA bus or van. After all, it is he or she who must make the split second decisions often required of them every day. Driving is only one part of the complicated equation that we work through on a miserable winter day.

None of our drivers could succeed without the support of the maintenance department. It is the maintenance department's diligent preparation that is the foundation for the confidence we have to operate under adverse conditions. Mechanics perform the mundane routine maintenance work and solve the vexing mechanical challenges that go along with them. The maintenance department works long and hard to sustain our credibility through inclement weather. Our cleaners polish the organization. It is their job to make TTA shine for the public. The amount of snow, slush and salt that is tracked through our buses and buildings would be enough to discourage a lesser man. Each day the cleaners rise to meet the challenge of a new day. They do their jobs with the foreknowledge that what they shined up at midnight, will in

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all likelihood be completely soiled by 7 A.M. the next day.

The administrative staff is the 3rd leg of the golden triangle of public service. Route Supervisors and yours truly are frequently checking roads from 4 A.M. We stay out as long as necessary which frequently lasts until the last bus is safely back in the garage in the evening. Dispatchers and TTA Center personnel scramble to make sure all the operational needs are met. They provide our customers with the most up to date information possible. Of course none of what we do can come to pass without the direction, planning and oversight that comes from the top with Paul and Jennifer.

As long as TTA exists, the voices and talents from the past will continue to impact the future. Steve Goodman may never have shaken hands with Paul Davis ... James Scyoc may never have heard the name of Harry Erwin ... Glen Mays and Darrell Chattfield may never have shared a break in the garage, but make no mistake about it, those who came before us continue to impact the way we do things today. We appreciate the expertise they shared with us. When they moved on, their wisdom and counsel remained. We may groan when we hear the gloomy forecast, but we will most assuredly rise and meet the challenges before us.

Teamwork is a hallmark of TTA, it's in our DNA. Pride (the healthy kind) causes the professional to meet the standards which have previously been set. We continue to serve only because of the public trust. The unseen “rewards” we reap along the way are the smiles of those who went before us. We continue to do the job in the manner that they took so much pride.

From the Chief



By Scott
Stultz

A Taxing Tale

By now you should have started to see them – emails, commercials, and other reminders that appear this time each year to signal that another tax filing season is upon us. Each year, it's the same story: you get all of your tax statements, get your tax forms or your tax preparation program, and sit down and try to make your way through that labyrinth that is commonly known as the Federal and State Tax Codes. Even if you are using a tax preparation program such as Turbo Tax or Tax Slayer, it can be quite a task to complete your returns. While you are completing all

of the forms and schedules required to do your annual return, you may wonder, “Where did this mess originate?” Allow me to give you a brief history of the US Federal Taxation System.

In 1913, the Sixteenth Amendment was added to the US Constitution. This amendment created our current income tax system. Before the Sixteenth Amendment, the primary means by which the government would raise money was by levying tariffs on items consumed (like a federal sales tax). The original tax schedule set in 1913 required a whopping 1% tax on income over \$20,000, which is equal to about \$1 million in today's money. If you made less than this amount, then you paid no taxes. In addition, the highest rate in 1913 was 7%, and it was only levied on the Bill Gates and Warren Buffet types.

Over time, the tax rates got higher and higher, and more and more citizens were included in the tax base. In addition, the forms to file your taxes got so complex that the due date for filing a return was moved from March 15th to April 15th to allow taxpayers more time to read and review the material.

Income tax rates reached their summit in the 1950s when they ranged from a minimum of 22.2% to a maximum of 92% (rather

confiscatory by any standard). The rates were reduced in 1964 to a range of 16% to 77%, and again in 1982 to a range of 12% to 50%. They fluctuated until the 1992 and 1993 Tax Acts set them at a range of 15% to 39.6%. These rates remained in effect until 2001 when the Tax Relief Act of 2001 lowered the tax rates to a range of 10% to 38.6%. After the expiration of the Tax Relief Act of 2001, the rates were allowed to climb slightly in 2013 to the current range of 10% to 39.6%.

The idea behind the tax reductions proposed by Kennedy/Johnson in the 1960s, Reagan in the 1980s, and Bush in the 2000s was to allow the taxpayers to keep more of their earnings. In theory, the excess money returned to the American families would allow them to spend the extra money as they pleased for purchases of goods and services or to reduce their debts. This, in turn, would help the US economy grow.

So, the next time that you think that you are overtaxed, considered this: At least we're not paying the rates that were in effect in the 1950s and 1960s. Good luck with your taxes, and happy filing!



Shop Talk



By Danny Stanley

Here we are in the brand new year of 2016. Our goal is to keep the buses in safe and dependable operating condition all year round. The Maintenance Department has implemented that the mechanic fueling the buses will also check the tread on the tires as the buses come in at the end of their run each day. This added safety inspection does not take away the driver's responsibility of pre-tripping before taking a bus out of the garage. In addition, the mechanic will also examine the video system to ensure the recorder has a hard drive and that the indicating lights are functioning properly.

We have two employees in the Maintenance Department that are about to reach their one year anniversary with TTA. David Browning, a cleaner, was hired February 17, 2015 and Darrell Chatfield, our newest mechanic, was hired on March 10, 2015. We would like to congratulate both of them for a job well done this past year.

Dispatcher's Corner

By Dispatchers

As the Dial a Ride Dispatcher, I am the first point of contact for our customers. I always try to present myself in a way that will give a friendly impression to our customers. The drivers are the true face of our company, though. They see the riders on a daily basis, and are able to talk to them more. The drivers are courteous and very helpful to our passengers. They go above and beyond what is expected of them on a daily basis. In the industry we are in, one would think there would be a lot of complaints. With Dial a Ride, it is the exact opposite. I receive a lot more compliments from our customers about our drivers and our services than I do complaints. Recently I was made aware of just one of these instances. ~~occasion.~~ A bystander was at a bank and witnessed one of our drivers (David Ball) going above and beyond with one of our passengers (Mrs. Sleet). The individual just watched as David greeted the customer with a smile and took the extra time to assist Mrs. Sleet with her needs. The unknown individual was really impressed at the way the driver assisted her. She made the comment "You just don't see that kind of compassion or kindness very much anymore".

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This is just one example of the many compliments that I have received. I love to brag on the drivers when I get compliments. It means we are leaving a positive impact on our customers. We need to keep up the good work!

Nick Preston

Yesterday I observed a cab driver giving poor customer service to his passenger at a local grocery store. I said to myself, he must be stressed or rushed for some reason. I thought to myself, he really needs trained in PASS Class with me. You might ask what is PASS Class? Its Passenger Service and Safety Training which familiarizes students with how to serve individuals that have disabilities. It helps you have a better understanding the practical difficulties individuals face on a daily basis. It empowers you to communicate with your passengers, provides tips on coping with stress that your passenger might be dealing with. Here are a few tips on dealing with Stress.

- **Deal with the cause:** If the tension comes from home, talk out your differences. If the problem is with your job, look at what you can do to positively

address the responsibility.

- **Talk out your troubles:** Find a levelheaded person you can trust. Don't look for someone who thinks just like you. Find someone who successfully handles stress and get their advice.
- **Learn to pace yourself:** Take one thing at a time.
- **Give in occasionally:** If you often get in to arguments with people, give in once in a while. Ask yourself, "Is this really worth fighting for?"
- **Give yourself a pat on the back for things you do well**

Brian Frazier

I'd like to take this time to thank Tri-State Transit Authority for this opportunity to be a part of a great team. Also would like to thank all the drivers for making me feel at home. It has been a great year I have learned so much and plan to learn much more. And many more years. All of my coworkers have been great role models. I enjoy speaking to the Community and helping the community.

Tyrus Masters

ESPRIT DE CORPS

If you've ever been on a sports team that had great morale and team spirit, you've experienced **esprit de corps**. The term is French, and it literally means "the spirit of the body," with body in this case **meaning** "group." This is our Family, Proud, Friendly and Dependable.

Norman J L Andrews Sr.

TTA Center



By Janie Fraback

Starting to work here at the TTA Center as the manager has been a lot of different things, which can be a very good thing. Learning new things is good for all of us. There is way more to being the TTA Manager than paper work. I am blessed with great help, not only TTA management; but also the people I work with. There were a lot of things that needed attention; and it has been addressed. Repainted, redone or whatever it was that needed taken care of. I have met some

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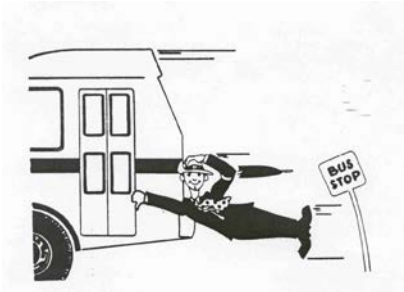
great customers since starting here at the center and I enjoy talking with them about a variety of things from the temperature to whatever we happen upon.

We have some very loyal and wonderful people riding with us on the buses. School children, teens, moms, dads, kids, and pets alike. TTA is a Tri State service that serves, and I am proud and happy to be a part of that.

Editor's Corner



By Jennifer Woodall



Levy

It's time again for TTA and the other levying bodies to renew their property tax levies in Cabell County, and for TTA, the City of Huntington.

Huntington City Council and the Cabell County Commission have approved the ordinances to allow the TTA levy to be on the May

10th primary ballot. They have submitted the required notice to the Secretary of State.

Speaking engagements are coming in pretty fast. So far the TTA is set to speak to the League of Woman Voters, the Huntington and Barboursville Rotary Clubs and the Kiwanis Club of Huntington. The radio and billboard advertisements have also been scheduled starting in April and May.

If anyone would like to have a yard sign, those will be available on March 1st. In addition to the yard signs, informational handouts and buttons will be available for distribution.

Coming to a Bus Near You - Next Bus Technology

TTA has been able to secure a grant with the help of KYOVA Interstate Planning Commission to install and implement Next Bus Technology on all fixed route buses.

What this means is, through a competitive bid process TTA entered into a contract with RouteMatch Software to install tablets and software which will make catching and riding the bus much easier than ever before.

Customers and Dispatchers will be able to see, via a smart phone, tablet or computer where the bus is.

When a customer wishes to catch the bus they will be able to open the app and see when the next bus will come by the closest stop to where the customer is standing. For those customers who still wish to call TTA for current bus information, the Dispatcher will be able to see on the computer screen the exact location of the bus.

We are adding TTA's QR code to the bus passes. Once the project is complete and available to the public the QR code will direct customers to TTA's website where they can download the App.

As part of this project we have included Automatic Vehicle Announcements (AVA). The AVA system will make the on-board stop announcement as well as scroll the written version across the on-board screen.

The head signs will automatically change according to where the bus is going.

We also added Notifications for Para-Transit. This means customers receive calls the evening before a scheduled trip. This call not only reminds them of their trip but confirms the pick-up time and gives them an opportunity to cancel or change the trip.