Fall 2013 Tribal Transportation News
Special Tribal Transit Edition

In the Driver’s Seat: On the Road with Tribal Transit

A joint publication of the seven Tribal Technical Assistance Program Centers

~ Making today’s transportation workforce stronger, smarter, and safer through technology, training, and education. ~

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Welcome to this Special Edition of the Tribal Transportation News, *In the Driver’s Seat, A Tribal Transit Newsletter*, produced through cooperation of the seven Regional TTAP Centers. Our intent is to give the reader an overview of some of the tribal transit systems operated by tribes across the United States. In this edition, we’ll look at coverage areas, populations served, miles covered, services offered, challenges, and much more. However, before we get into some of the specifics from various tribal transit agencies, let’s look at some of the history of the Tribal Transit Program itself.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) began providing funding for transit operations in non-urbanized (rural) areas in the 1980s. It began as the FTA Section 18 program for rural areas, and was later codified in 49 U.S.C. Section 5311. Since they were all largely rural, tribes could also receive funding to initiate transit programs. However, few tribes took advantage of this funding, since the Program was administered by the states. Because most tribes consider themselves to be sovereign nations, they would only legally interact with the federal government, and not with individual states.

Eventually, Congress recognized the need to provide a funding source specifically for tribal transit. In 2005, the Tribal Transit Program, officially the Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Program, was authorized under SAFETEA-LU. The first awards under the new program came in FY2006.

From 2006 to 2012, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) administered the Tribal Transit Program as a discretionary program under 49 U.S.C. 5311(c). SAFETEA-LU established funding levels at $8 Million for 2006, $10 million for 2007, $12 million for 2008, and $15 million for 2009. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) directed that an additional $17 million be added to the Tribal Transit Program in 2009. During the three extensions of SAFETEA-LU, the funding level remained at $15 million per year. In the first seven (7) years of the program, over 400 awards were made to approximately 160 tribes, for a total of over $107 million.

The new surface transportation funding bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012, continued the 5311(c) discretionary program and established a new Tribal Transit Formula Grant Program, under 5311(j).

The Tribal Transit Program now totals $30 million, of which $25 million is for the formula program and $5 million is for the discretionary grant program. Formula factors include 2 different tiers of vehicle revenue miles and the number of low-income individuals residing on tribal lands. Tier 1, accounting for 50% of the formula, is based on vehicle revenue miles reported in the National Transit Database (NTD). Tier 2, making up 25% of the formula, is based on tribes reporting at least 200,000 revenue miles. The final 25% of the formula, Tier 3, is based on tribes providing public transportation on reservations where more than 1,000 low-income individuals reside. The first allocations under the formula grant program were included in the FTA FY2013 apportionments. Eighty-three tribes received a total of $24,950,000 under the three-tiered system. Awards for the FY2013 discretionary grant program are currently pending.

Although the FTA Tribal Transit Program, including both formula and discretionary grants, is relatively small compared to overall transit funding in the U.S., the funding has enabled many tribes to begin transit services and open

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opportunities for tribal members. Tribes have developed working relations with local colleges, human service programs, and other local governments to establish sustainable transit programs.

Challenges for tribes are many. Some of the most difficult economic conditions are found on Indian reservations and tribal lands in the United States. A lack of transportation infrastructure such as roads and passenger transit, as well as physical isolation, contribute to sometimes desperate conditions in Indian Country. Other challenges include tribal sovereignty, low population densities, funding, a lack of coordination, changing leadership, lack of data, vehicle maintenance, and access to adequate training.

As one will conclude from the articles in this edition, many tribes have overcome numerous obstacles in order to provide reliable transit services for their Nations and the communities that surround them. Teamwork is the overarching theme that runs through these stories. Tribal transits receiving support from its tribal leadership, the tribal people, the other agencies within the tribe, and the communities surrounding the tribe, will go miles in maintaining a smooth road ahead for tribal transit.

(Continued from page 3)

(By Jim Self and Karla Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from Charles Rutkowski, CTAA, “Tribal Transit, Overcoming Obstacles.”)

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**Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma Transit**

**Year Started:** 2008  
**Transportation Director:** Michael Lynn  
**Annual Ridership:** 40,000  
**Number of Vehicles:** 4 owned by Nation  
**Number of Drivers:** 16  
**Annual Mileage:** 440,000  
**Website:** [http://transit.cherokee.org](http://transit.cherokee.org)  
**Hours:** Varied by coordinating agencies  
**Route Types:** Demand response & fixed  
**Phone Number:** (918) 453-5371 or (800) 256-0671  
**Marketing:** $1 roundtrip, free Fridays, website

**History** – The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma is the largest of three Cherokee federally recognized tribes in the United States. Established in 1838, it includes people descended from members of the old Cherokee Nation who were forced to relocate from the Southeast, descendants of Cherokee Freedmen, and descendants of Natchez Nation.

Beginning with the Curtis Act of 1898, the federal government all but dissolved the former Cherokee Nation’s governmental and civic institutions, to make way for the incorporation of Indian Territory into the new state of Oklahoma. After the end of its reservation in 1906, the U.S. government often appointed chiefs to the Cherokee Nation, just long enough to sign treaties until a more formal government was established in 1938.

In 1970, under President Richard Nixon, the U.S. adopted a self-determination policy, allowing the Cherokee Nation to rebuild its government. In 1971, the people elected W. W. Keeler, President of Phillips Petroleum, as Chief of the Cherokee Nation. Ross Swimmer and Wilma Mankiller succeeded Keeler. In 1975, the Tribe drafted a constitution
Cherokee Nation Transit ~ (from page 4)

under the name Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, which was ratified on June 26, 1976.

Today, the Cherokee Nation is thriving as it experiences significant economic growth through business, corporate, real estate, and agricultural interests, including numerous highly profitable casino operations.

Over 299,862 people are enrolled in the Cherokee Nation, with 189,228 living within the state of Oklahoma. Headquartered in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, the Cherokee Nation has a Tribal jurisdictional area spanning 14 counties in the northeastern corner of Oklahoma. These are Adair, Cherokee, Craig, Delaware, Mayes, McIntosh, Muskogee, Nowata, Ottawa, Rogers, Sequoyah, Tulsa, Wagoner, and Washington Counties. The large number of Tribal members, along with the expansive geographic area of the Nation bring transportation challenges for many in the tribe. In 2008, the Cherokee Nation cooperated with KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS) to provide Tribal employees and the general public with low cost transportation to employment sources, also known as park-n-ride service, from Stilwell to Tahlequah. In 2009, Pelivan Transit came on board to begin the Pryor to Catoosa route. Since then, the program has expanded to include demand response services and additional fixed routes through Muskogee County Transit (MCT) and Cimarron Public Transit.

“Utilizing existing transit agencies has allowed the Nation to expanded its transit services allowing more options for our riders and employees” said Michael Lynn, Cherokee Nation Transportation Director.

The Nation continues to gauge the effectiveness and viability of their routes by offering an online survey that gives clients a voice in the system.

“The online survey has been a great tool for us,” said Sherry Waters, Cherokee Nation Infrastructure Data Coordinator.

These are just some of the comments posted online:

“$1 round trip vs. $10 per day on gas... you do the math... plus, Friday is free! - Trina, Stillwell Route

“The Cherokee Nation Transit program has saved me at least $50 per week. I can ride the bus back and forth to work all week for a few cents more than the price of one gallon of gas. You just can’t beat that!” – Michelle, Stilwell Route

“The Cherokee Transit program has saved me $40 a week on gas.” – Brad, Sallisaw Route

(Charla Sloan, KATS Transit Director, Michael Lynn, Cherokee Nation Transportation Director; Sherry Waters, Cherokee Nation Infrastructure Data Coordinator; Jeanie Sanders, Stilwell Route Supervisor; Rob Endicott, Cherokee Nation Transportation Planner.

(BY K. Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from Cherokee Nation Tribal website, and Wikipedia)
Sitka Tribe of Alaska Works with Local Government to Improve Roadways for Transit Use

The Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA), which comprises approximately 20 percent of the population in Sitka’s unified city-borough, interacts and cooperates regularly with the City and Borough of Sitka (CBS).

The relationship between the two governments has been steadily building over the past several decades. Each month, representatives from the STA and CBS staff meet to provide updates on various tribal projects and programs. As the STA developed a transit system for Sitka, it partnered with CBS on multiple tasks and projects to improve transit accessibility for all community members.

A Framework for Collaboration
The CBS and the STA signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in the 1990s that established a framework for collaboration between the local government and the Tribe. The MOU guides the CBS assembly in making decisions related to Tribal projects and agreements, and identifies Tribal and municipal liaisons to facilitate routine communication between the two governments.

In addition to the MOU, the CBS and the STA developed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) for each individual project that the local government and the Tribe jointly construct. Each MOA implements the principles of the MOU on a project-by-project basis.

In recent years, the STA has partnered with local agencies and organizations to develop The RIDE, a fixed-route bus transit system within the city of Sitka. While the STA funds and operates The RIDE without direct involvement from the CBS, the CBS supports STA transportation construction projects by partnering with the Tribe to implement roadway projects that improve transit’s roads and access.

The RIDE
In 2002, the Center for Community (CFC), a provider of community-based services for residents with mobility needs in Alaska, issued a request for proposals (RFP) to provide a fixed-route transit system for Tribal and non-Tribal residents in Sitka.

Recognizing that nearly 15 percent of local Tribal resident households do not have personal vehicles, the STA responded to the RFP and CFC awarded the project to the STA to improve mobility options for Tribal residents, creating The RIDE.

With its opening in 2002, The RIDE initially consisted of two routes (the Blue Line and the Red Line), carrying an average of 55 people each day.

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Operation of the system is supported by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311(f) funding and FTA Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas, administered through the CFC and contracted to the STA.

In 2007, the STA received a Tribal Transit Program Grant, Section 5311(c) to expand The RIDE, adding a third fixed route. This route, the Green Line, improves transit access for many Tribal residents by connecting Tribal housing, medical, and educational facilities to downtown Sitka. Since the addition of the Green Line, ridership on The RIDE has grown to about 320 riders daily.

The RIDE is the only fixed route transit service in Sitka, and both Tribal and nontribal residents utilize the service. While the CBS was not a major player in the planning and funding of The RIDE, the CBS funded the freight delivery of a new bus to the STA for The RIDE and the installation of new bus stop signage.

The transportation manager for the STA and municipal engineer for the CBS regularly meet to discuss improvements to The RIDE and road projects that impact The RIDE service area. Though the governments are not always formally involved in each other’s transportation projects, there is a high level of collaboration and information sharing between them. The STA and CBS possess a mutual respect for the work of each agency, and their regular communication allows for consideration of each other’s priorities and needs.

Recently, the Sitka Public Works Department has coordinated with the STA on several local road projects linked to The RIDE improving its ability to serve all residents.

Indian River Trailhead Project
The CBS and the STA are currently coordinating to make transit and parking improvements at the Indian River Trailhead. The RIDE provides transit service along Indian River Road and has a bus stop a few hundred feet from the road’s terminus at the Indian River Trailhead, which provides access to the Indian River walking trail and has an unmaintained city-owned gravel parking lot. The trailhead is adjacent to an STA Tribal housing authority development. The STA partnered with CBS to pave the parking area and install a new bus turnaround, bus shelter, and bus pullout at the trailhead.

The STA and the Sitka Public Works Department developed an MOA for the project. The MOA states that the STA is responsible for funding and contracting the design and construction of the trailhead and bus pullout, and the Public Works Department will cooperate with the STA to allow the Tribe to complete this work on CBS-owned land. The Public Works Department will also participate in the review of the project’s design to ensure that it meets CBS’ standards. Design for the Indian River Trailhead is nearly complete, and the STA plans to release an RFP to improve the trailhead and install the bus shelter and pullout by spring of 2013.

Benefits of Collaboration
The partnerships the STA has established with the Sitka Public Works Department and CBS assemblies function effectively because the partners communicate regularly and work together to address their independent and sometimes mutual needs. Collaboration between the STA and the local government to complete Tribe funded projects related to The RIDE benefit the entire community, as these improvements have increased the transit system’s accessibility for Tribal and non-Tribal Sitka residents alike.

(Tribal Transportation Case Study, FHWA, September, 2013)
The Chickasaw Nation Transit

**History** - From the Chickasaw Nation’s early migration to what is now Mississippi, Kentucky, Alabama and Tennessee, to the purchase of their current homeland in south-central Oklahoma in the mid 1800’s, the Chickasaw culture and heritage have always had roots in nature and the elements. Early Chickasaw societies were reported to be largely agrarian with sophisticated governmental systems. Their proud history as fierce warriors caused the Chickasaw Nation to be known as the “Unconquered and Unconquerable.” That progressive spirit continued after the Civil War when the Chickasaw built some of the first schools, banks, and businesses in Indian Territory.

Today, the Chickasaw Nation, headquartered in Ada, Oklahoma, has Tribal jurisdictional areas in Bryan, Carter, Coal, Garvin, Grady, Jefferson, Johnston, Love, McClain, Marshall, Murray, Pontotoc, and Stephens Counties. With Tribal members in 13 counties, a dependable transit system is key for communities to access employment, education, medical facilities, and shopping.

“There’s never a dull moment in the transit business,” said Angie Gilliam, Transit Director of the Chickasaw Nation. “From a random drug test, to a sick driver, to an unruly passenger.”

These are just some of the challenges faced by a transit system on any given day. With tribal members spread across such a large area, and sometimes outside the jurisdictional boundaries, coordination efforts become a necessity.

“We work with the Choctaw Nation, Seminole Nation, and Creek Nation,” said Gilliam. “We also do some coordination with KATS (KI BOIS Area Transit System and SORTS (Southern Oklahoma Rural Transit System).”

In the future, Gilliam would like to house their transit operation in a new building and will be submitting a grant proposal for that endeavor. Updating technology by adding tablets in vehicles and the expansion of routes are other priorities for future funding.

Gilliam also serves as treasurer of the Oklahoma Tribal Transportation Council and chair of the Transit Subcommittee within the council. (By K. Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from The Chickasaw Nation Media and Wikipedia.)
Choctaw Nation Transit

History - For hundreds of years before Europeans came to the United States, the Choctaw Nation was a tribe of farmers who lived in what is now the southeastern United States. In 1830, their forced removal, which became known as the “Trail of Tears,” brought the tribe to southeastern Oklahoma. Since then, Tribal members have overcome adversity to grow to nearly 200,000 strong, the country’s third largest Tribe. The Tribe’s growing business enterprises have allowed it to work to improve the lives of Tribal members who have a rich tradition of serving in the military, serving their community, and serving the State of Oklahoma.

As of 2011, the Tribe has 223,279 enrolled members, of which 84,670 live within the state of Oklahoma. The Tribal jurisdictional area is 10,864 square miles and includes all or portion of these counties: Atoka, Bryan, Choctaw, Coal, Haskell, Hughes, Johnston, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, and Pushmataha.

For more than a century, the Choctaw Nation has developed an extensive network of services and programs for the benefit of its citizens – including essential activities such as health care, education and employment options. As these services expanded their reach, one vital component was noticeably missing – the options to access them.

Through the direction of its Tribal leadership, such as the Tribal Council, officials in the Outreach Services office – led by Assistant Chief Gary Batton – began work to obtain support for the development of a transportation operation. With the assistance of entities in the state of Oklahoma, the Choctaw Nation applied for a grant through the Federal Transit Administration’s Tribal Transit program in 2006. In the spring of 2007, the nation was awarded funding and, initially, began focusing on transporting more than 10,000 Choctaw members to health care services, including those provided directly by the nation, as well as other outside options, such as specialists and advanced care. With funding achieved, the work of purchasing vehicles, hiring and training drivers and developing operating procedures was next.

In late 2007, Choctaw Nation Transit was able to incorporate the Community Health Representative (CHR) medical transportation service into their system. With assistance from the Community Transportation Association of America, consultants, and the Choctaw leadership, the new tribal transit introduced a trip-scheduling program, developed a budget, and submitted an application for the next round of funding.

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Since 2008, Choctaw Nation Transit has been coordinating services with area agencies to increase the system’s sustainability and more importantly, to broaden their impact on the needs of the community. Systems that coordinate with Choctaw Nation Transit include: Little Dixie Transit, KATS (KI BOIS Area Transit), SORTS (Southern Oklahoma Rural Transit System), JAMM (Johnston, Atoka, Marshall, Murray Counties), Chickasaw Nation Transit, and Cherokee Nation Transit.

“When you get that thank-you call from a rider who says that they wouldn’t have been able to make that appointment without you – that’s what makes it all worthwhile,” said Johnny James, Choctaw Nation Transit Director.

As the service has grown over the years, the need for training increases. “Training is huge for us,” said James. “We shut down our operation every third Friday of the month to concentrate on one aspect of training. Whether it be customer service, CPR, wheelchair, Defensive Driving, we always have monthly training.”

Also, with recent FTA guidelines out on safety and security, James was quick to attain a safety certification for one of his employees, so that he could add a Safety and Security Officer to his staff. “We take advantage of training offered by CTAA, and this one was offered at the conference this year in June.”

Looking to the future and the growing transit demands in southeast Oklahoma, James hopes to replace some of the aging vehicles in his fleet and add 6 new drivers.

“We have to keep up with the growth in our service because the need is so great,” said James. “It’s certainly a challenge, but it’s one that we’re both excited and ready to face.”

James is also quick to mention that the growth and success of their program is no accident. “We couldn’t do this without the support of the Nation, the Tribal Council, our Tribal officials, Chief Pyle and Assistant Chief Batton,” James added. “They’ve helped us do it the right way.”

(By K. Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from Rich Sampson, CTAA, The Choctaw Nation Tribal website, and Wikipedia)
Yurok Tribe meets the needs of the Klamath community

**History** - The Yurok Tribe is California’s largest Indian Tribe with nearly 5,000 enrolled members. The Yurok Tribe’s territory consists of all ancestral lands, specifically including, but not limited to, the Yurok Reservation’s lands, which currently extend from one mile on each side from the mouth of the Klamath River and upriver for a distance of 44 miles. The Yurok Tribe’s people are also known historically as the Pohlik-la, Ner-er-er, Petch-ik-lah and Klamath River Indians.

For millennia traditional Yurok religion and sovereignty was practiced throughout all their historic villages along the Pacific Coast and inland on the Klamath River. The Yurok people carried on extensive trade and social relations through this region and beyond. Yurok commerce traditionally included a monetary system based on the use of dentalium shells and other items as currency.

The Yurok traditional ceremonies include the Deerskin Dance, Flower Dance, Boat Dance, and others, that have drawn Yurok people and neighboring Tribes together for renewal, healing and prayer.

Today, the Yurok Tribe, headquartered in Klamath, CA, continues to meet the needs of its people and the Klamath community with a new Dial-A-Ride transit service, which began operation in July, 2013. Their transit vehicle is an eight-passenger 4x4 van equipped with a hydraulic wheelchair lift.

The Yurok Tribal Transportation Department received more than $400,000 in funding from the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration., to offer these services.

The Dial-A-Ride service provides local public transit to all residents in and around the Klamath area, including services to Crescent City, CA, and will operate from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

The Yurok Tribe has been working on numerous projects to provide jobs and opportunities in Klamath and to improve transportation infrastructure and mobilization services that benefit the region.

“We are pleased to offer and expand our efforts to improve transportation to the community of Klamath,” said Yurok Tribe Vice Chair Susan Masten.

“The new transit services are a direct result of the tribe’s ‘innovative approach’ to work cooperatively with community partners and funding agencies” said Joseph James, Yurok Transportation Manager “The Yurok Tribe continues to provide a multifaceted approach for the Klamath community’s growing transportation needs.”

(By Adam Spencer, The Triplicate, July 2013, with contributions from the Yurok Tribal website)
Comanche Nation Transit

History - Archaeologists trace Comanche origins to the western Great Basin in what is now the far northwest United States. A Plains Indian Tribe, the Comanche migrated and eventually arrived on the Great Plains, where their dominance earned them the nickname “Lords of the Plains.” Their territory included portions of Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, and all of Oklahoma. Eventually the Comanche controlled trade on the southern plains and participated in a trade network that connected the Mississippi River Valley with the Rockies and Texas with the Missouri River. Their close relationship with the Kiowa is thought to have begun sometime around 1800.

The Comanche and Kiowa Tribes continue that relationship today with the coordination of transit services.

Comanche Tribal enrollment now stands at 15,191, with approximately 7,763 members residing in the Lawton-Ft.Sill and surrounding areas of southwest Oklahoma. The Comanche Nation complex is located nine miles north of Lawton, Oklahoma and employs about 145 people. With Tribal members located in communities such as Apache, Cache, Cyril, Elgin, Fletcher, Geronimo, Indiahoma, and Lawton, the need for a reliable transit system to provide tribal members access to essential services and opportunities became apparent.

The Comanche Nation Transit has been providing transportation services to the public since 2001. Their objective is to provide (continued on page 13)

Comanche Nation Transit

Year started: 2001
Transportation Director: Adrian Tehauno
Head Dispatch: Elia Ahdosy
Budget Analyst: Franklin Akoneto
Annual Ridership: 17,972
Number of vehicles: 15
Number of Drivers: 6
Website: http://www.comanchenation.com
Hours: Monday through Friday 5:00 am to 7:00 pm
Location: 584 Bingo Rd, Lawton, OK 73507
Route types: Fixed and demand response
Phone Number: 580-492-3389
Marketing efforts: Brochures and community presentations
Comanche Nation Transit
(Continued from page 12)

assistance for passengers in a prompt and courteous manner without discriminating against race, color, physical disability, and national origin.

With future funding, the Comanche Nation Transit plans to upgrade their GPS system, purchase dispatching software, and add dual cameras for the vehicles according to Franklin Akoneto, Budget Analyst.

“We are hoping this will increase our ridership,” said Elia Ahdosy, Head Dispatcher.

(By K Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from Comanche Nation Tribal website, and Wikipedia.)

Yankton Sioux Tribe breaks ground for new transit facility

Under a striped tent with over ninety people in attendance, the Ihanktowan transit building project was formally begun by the Yankton Sioux Tribe (YST) of South Dakota on July 30, 2013.

With all the council officers and several council members in attendance, Chairman Thurman Cournoyer and Vice Chairwoman Ida Ashes recognized the importance of developing transit service for the residents and workers traveling between Marty, Wagner, Lake Andes and the Ft. Randall Casino in South Dakota.

In June, the service provided nearly 1,600 rides – with 650 of these rides taking Tribal members to jobs. The transit driver team and staff were introduced and recognized for their hard work.

Wesley Hare, Jr., YST Transportation Planner explained that this facility will provide the two-year old Ihanktowan Transit Service with a maintenance garage and wash bay, as well as getting six buses under cover during the harsh winter months. There will be five offices and a conference/training room.

Construction is planned to start in October on the property north of the existing offices in Marty. (continued on page 14)
YST building new facility
(continued from page 13)

The building will be funded by a $1 million Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant.

Both Senators Thune and Johnson were important in obtaining this grant. Jeannie Hovland, Native American Outreach Coordinator for Senator Thune brought a message of congratulations on developing this needed transit service. Jennifer Stewart, FTA RegionVIII Tribal and State Programs Coordinator, added her encouragement.

The YST has committed to fund engineering efforts as well as purchase a wheelchair-lift equipped van and a skid for snow removal.

As part of the Prayer and Blessing of the Grounds, David Arrow, Sr. recognized the importance of horses in tribal history and the comparison to this “new teepee for the Iron Horse traveling the black roads.” Songs, prayers and a drum circle supported the celebration of this new facility that will serve, in the words of John Stone, TERO Director, “the good of all the Yankton Sioux Nation.”

(By Jennifer Stewart, FTA, Region 8)

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians - Fueling for the future

History - What is now Western North Carolina has been part of the homeland of the Cherokee people for untold centuries. Today’s Eastern Band members are direct descendants of those who avoided the Cherokees’ forced removal to Oklahoma in the 1830’s the “Trail of Tears.” Their home today is the 56,000-acre Qualla Boundary in Western North Carolina, adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. There are more than 13,000 enrolled members of the Tribe, over 60% of whom live on the Boundary.

The Qualla Boundary includes the town of Cherokee, NC as well as several other communities. Many of these townships would have been clan townships in earlier times (Bird clan, Wolf clan, etc).

The Tribe adopted a constitution and organized a modern government in 1827. In 1865, the State of North Carolina assured the permanent residence of the Cherokees. In 1868, a general council of the Eastern Cherokees was held to form a Tribal Government, and the new government was inaugurated December 1, 1870.

Transportation Services
The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians began offering transportation services in 1997, at first primarily for medical appointments. In 2000, they initiated regular, public routes on the Cherokee Indian Reservation / Qualla Boundary, adding crosstown Cherokee loop routes in 2004. Public transportation beautifully fits both the region’s need to promote air quality and the Cherokee tradition of communal sharing.

Cherokee Transit drivers are trained to provide passengers with safe, dependable transportation. Training includes defensive driving, passenger assistance, customer service and wheelchair securement.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee recently installed a bio diesel gas pump at its filling station to fuel up tribal transit and maintenance vehicles, as well as buses from the Cherokee Boys Club.

The fuel contains 20 percent bio diesel, a cleaner-burning gas that releases less sulfur dioxide into the air, reducing pollution. Any regular diesel
(continued on page 15)
bus, van or truck can use the bio diesel without needing to be retrofitted.

Cherokee officials recently announced the opening of the bio diesel filling station and the launch of a bio diesel shuttle between Cherokee and Gatlinburg. The van was painted with a mural of Cherokees walking through a forest path. Also painted on the vehicle are masks symbolizing the seven Cherokee clans.

“We wanted to make a unique type of vehicle,” Kathy Littlejohn, transit manager for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, said.

The new van was paid for with $170,000 from a federal air quality initiative, which also covers the cost of the driver’s salary, a ticket office, fuel, advertising brochures promoting the new shuttle service and operating expenses. The new bio diesel pump in Cherokee costs approximately $85,000, which included nearly equal contributions from an Environmental Protection Agency grant, the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, the N.C. State Energy office and the Cherokee Boys Club.

The bio diesel pump will be used by Tribal employees and is not a public pump, but Littlejohn said she hopes to see area private gas stations adding bio diesel in the future. Distributors in Asheville, N.C., and Spartanburg, S.C., as well as the Smoky Mountain Bio Fuels Refinery opening soon in Dillsboro, will supply the bio diesel.

The average vehicle entering the national park has 2.9 passengers, according to Littlejohn, so a shuttle service run on bio diesel could reduce the number of vehicles in the Nation’s most heavily visited park while also reducing the hazy pollution that shrouds the nearby mountain vistas.

**Cherokee Transit team takes first place in NC**

The Cherokee Transit team represented the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians well at the State Transit Roadeo. The team of Christina Goings, Wilson Oocumma and Richie Bottchenbaugh took first place in the Team Van Category at the North Carolina Department of Transportation/North Carolina Public Transportation Association State Roadeo, held April 5-7 at Cape Fear Community College in Castle Hayne, NC.

“We’re one of the smallest systems,” said Kathy Littlejohn, Cherokee Transit Manager. “So, for them to go down and take first place against some of the biggest systems in the state, I just can’t express how proud I am of them.”

“When they enter, the other systems don’t want them to and that just makes me feel that we are really doing what we’re supposed to be doing and taking all of the training and competitions seriously, so that we always keep the passenger safety first in mind, and this just shows it. It just proves it,” said Littlejohn.

(Contributions from Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal website and Cherokee Transit website; the CherokeePhoenix.org/Oct. 19, 2013, Smoky Mountain News; and Scott McKie B.P. One Feather, USET Headline News)
The Kalispel Tribe of Indians reservation is located in Pend Oreille County, in the extreme northeast corner of Washington, bordering the Idaho panhandle. Newport is the largest town and county seat. Adjacent counties include: Boundary County, Idaho; Bonner County, Idaho; Spokane County, Washington; and Stevens County, Washington. Pend Oreille County shares its northern border with British Columbia, Canada.

Tribal Government and Culture
The Kalispel Tribe is a self-sufficient entity with its own business enterprises, Tribal education and health programs, and strong alliances with non-tribal entities. The Tribe has a rich heritage and uses tradition to work together for the advancement of its people. The Kalispel Indians have been called the “river/lake paddlers” because they were originally semi-nomadic hunters, diggers, and fisherman.

Today there are over 430 Kalispel Tribal members: 1/3 live on the reservation, 1/3 live in Spokane, and 1/3 live throughout the rest of the U.S., according to tribal sources. Approximately 54 percent of all Tribal membership is under the age of 18. Elders make up the smallest percentage of Tribal members.

Public Transportation
In May 2009, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians initiated a deviated fixed route service centering around the Wellness Center on the reservation. A third-party contractor initially operated the service, but in November 2009, the Tribe took over the daily functions. Service is provided to communities as far north as Ione, south to Spokane, and east to Newport. Service is open to the general public and operates Monday through Saturday. The Kalispel Transit System (KALTRAN) is a public transportation system now operated by the Kalispel Tribal Planning and Public Works Department under the Kalispel Tribal Business Council in Pend Oreille County, Washington. KALTRAN offices are located approximately 50 miles north of Spokane in Cusick, Washington. The Kalispel Tribe reservation is approximately 10 miles long by 1 mile wide and located just east of Cusick.

KALTRAN provides deviated fixed route service to the reservation, to the towns of Cusick and Usk and regionally to north Spokane, Newport, and Ione. There are over 160 miles of routes.

The fleet consists of one 38-passenger bus, two 22-passenger buses, two 15-passenger vans, and a 7-passenger van. All KALTRAN vehicles are ADA compliant with lifts/ramps for wheelchairs.

KALTRAN is currently funded through grants from the Federal Transit Administration, the Washington State Department of Transportation, and contributions from local agencies and organizations. The system charges $1.00 per trip, except for the Newport/Airway Height service, which costs $2.50 each way. KALTRAN operates a feedback line whereby riders can contact the Tribe. The number is 509-447-7247.

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The mission of KALTRAN is to enhance the economic and social well being of the Kalispel Tribal people and surrounding communities through the delivery of safe, reliable, efficient, and friendly transportation. Their web address is http://www.kalispeltribe.com/transportation/

Some of the rider comments received by KALTRAN include this comment from Kimberly: “By riding KALTRAN, I feel I can get to work safely, especially in our crazy winter weather.”

Linda said, “We live in a very depressed area financially, and this bus service has greatly helped a lot of us.”

Candy Jo notes, “Of course, there is the obvious benefit of utilizing the bus. It saves us financially, both gas and the occasional run-in with the deer. Less cars on the road is better for the environment.”

(By K. Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from the Kalispel Tribal website and CTAA)

Navajo Transit System (NTS)

History - Anthropologists believe the Navajo probably arrived in the Southwest between 800 and 1,000 years ago, crossing the Bering Strait land bridge and traveling south. The Navajo people call themselves Dine’, literally meaning “The People.” The Dine’ speak about their arrival on the earth as a part of their story on the creation.

The Navajo are believed to have learned the rudiments of agriculture after arriving in the Four Corners area. They became acquainted with domesticated livestock after contact with the Spanish, taking on shepherding and horsemanship.

Spanning approximately 27,000 square miles across three states, the Navajo Nation is the largest sovereign nation in the contiguous United States. It has a strong presence in U.S. government and often leads the way in Tribal efforts to promote key areas such as economic development, health care, and education at the national level. Despite its prominence, the sheer size and remote nature of the Navajo Reservation presents unique challenges in managing its infrastructure and resources.

The Navajo Transit System’s (NTS) services and priorities are providing safe and reliable public transportation for

Lee Bigwater, Dept. Manager, Navajo Nation Transit

the Navajo Nation. This is achieved through improving the quality of life for all citizens for the Navajo Nation by increasing the accessibility to services and resources of the public and private sectors, particularly in meeting the needs of health care, education, employment, recreation, entertainment and shopping.

NTS is a department under the Division of General Services within the Navajo Nation Government and is funded primarily through the New Mexico and Arizona Departments of Transportation. NTS administers and operates inter-city route transportation services for the general public. NTS provides public transportation services to 41 chapters out of 110 Navajo

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Chapter communities; many routes operate along state highways. NTS buses pick up passengers at designated stops.

The demand for services exceeds the number of buses and routes because the Navajo Nation occupies a substantial land area with a large population and long driving distances between destinations. With the limited number of routes available now, and the confinements of buses to major highways, many people who want services are not able to reach locations where buses normally pick up passengers.

Navajo Transit System receives Administration, Operating and Capital funding under the Section 5311 Rural Public Transportation Program from Arizona, New Mexico and Utah Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Navajo Nation. According to Lee Bigwater, Department Manager, Navajo Transit System, transit drivers participate in many types of training including Defensive Driving, First Aid and CPR, Customer Service, Drug and Alcohol Compliance, and Wheelchair Securement.

Some of the marketing plans that have been used by NTS in the past have included media, such as radio and newspaper, transit conferences, Tribal fairs, and billboards along major highways, noted Bigwater.

“Now, we do not actually provide any marketing because of our over-capacity in our ridership on every route,” said Bigwater.

“We also have a new 12,300 square feet transit facility which includes the administration offices, driver training room, and four repair and maintenance bays with the latest service equipment,” he added.

"Navajo Transit System's new transit facility in Window Rock, AZ"

(Navajo Transit System (NTS)

Year started: 1980
Department Manager: Lee Bigwater
FY 2013 Ridership: 243,546
Number of Vehicles: 13 motorcoaches, 15 buses, 6 vans
Number of Drivers: 26
Website: http://www.navajotransit.com/
Area Covered: 27,600 square miles plus 3 border towns: Gallup, Flagstaff, Farmington
Marketing efforts: Radio, newspapers, tribal conferences, tribal fairs, billboard
Hours: 5:00 am to 7:00 pm
Phone: (929) 729-4002

(By K. Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from IHS.gov and Navajo Nation website)
**History** - The Muscogee (Creek) people are descendants of a remarkable culture that, before 1500, spanned the southeastern United States. Early ancestors of the Muscogee constructed magnificent earthen pyramids along the rivers of this region as part of their elaborate ceremonial complexes. The historic Muscogee later built expansive towns within these same broad river valleys in the present states of Alabama, Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. The Muscogee were not one Tribe but a union of several. This union evolved into a confederacy that some described as the most sophisticated political organization north of Mexico. Member Tribes were called Tribal towns. In the removal treaty of 1832, Muscogee leadership exchanged the last of the cherished Muscogee ancestral homelands for new lands in Indian Territory (Oklahoma).

Today, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) is headquartered in Okmulgee, Oklahoma and has jurisdiction in Creek, Hughes, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, McIntosh, Muskogee, Tulsa, and Wagoner Counties in Oklahoma. In 2011, there were 69,162 people enrolled in the MCN. Of these, 55,591 lived within the state of Oklahoma.

With their large population numbers spread across 8 counties and an increasing number of elders, the Tribe introduced transit in 2005.

“It’s just to give people a way to get to wherever they need to go for a small charge,” said Charley LaSarge, MCN Transportation Director. “There are a lot of our Tribal members who ride it to Walmart. They ride it to doctor’s appointments. They ride it to clinics, just anywhere they need transportation.”

LaSarge said they team up with KI BOIS Area Transit System (KATS) to serve the 11 districts in the Nation. The transit program uses Federal Transit Administration’s 5311 funds to contract with KATS.

Under its Ride-to-Work (RTW) program for MCN employees, three routes have been established. Employees in Wetumka, Eufaula, and Glenpool can ride a regularly scheduled bus for three dollars per round trip, saving riders the expense of fuel and vehicle maintenance.

LaSarge feels that the success of the program is because of marketing efforts within the nation and the economy. According to Kogee Spaniard, Transportation Specialist, the transit staff makes visits to community centers and distributes information on RTW routes, KATS partnerships, and bus passes.

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MCN Transit
(continued from page 17)

“We also visit local apartment complexes and provide sign-up sheets to see if riders would like to set up a scheduled shopping day at their complex,” said Spaniard.

“Our grant writer is working on a survey that we plan to send out to the communities to see what transit needs are out there,” continued Spaniard. “We’ll also gauge how much interest there is for another RTW route and find out how we can best help our communities.”

Under LaSarge’s leadership, the MCN Transit Authority has initiated a Giving Back to Our Communities Program. This plan enables riders to use the transit service free for one day per month.

LaSarge is satisfied with the results they have been able to achieve with transit. He attributes part of that success to the ability of many of the drivers to speak the Mvskoke language. “I’m sure there are times when they pick up elderly people that feel more free to speak the language with our drivers,” stated LaSarge.

Red Hicks, a coach operator for the program, takes passengers on longer trips, either across the state or cross-country. He feels his skill in the Mvskoke language helps older passengers feel at ease. He also points out that the drivers are not limited to just driving the bus.

“When I go out, I do everything I can for them. I tell them when I get on the bus, ‘I’m here to help you.’ Because in the past, I think, I’m not sure, there were non-Indian drivers, would just take these people to the hotel and then they would just leave and come back and pick them up, which we don’t do. When we get there, I’m with them. I stay at the same motel with them; I eat with them. Whatever events we’re doing, I join them. That’s what they like about me; I’m one of them, not just a bus driver,” said Hicks.

With future funding, MCN Transit would like to build a new transportation building and look at possibly offering a charter service and trolley service.

(MCN tribal jurisdictional area)

Muscogee (Creek) Nation Transit

Year started: 2005
Transportation Director: Charley LaSarge
Transportation Specialist: Kogee Spaniard
Annual Ridership: 31,957
Number of vehicles: 14
Number of Drivers: 7
Website: http://www.muscogeenationsn.gov/Pages/InteriorAffairs/interioraffairs.html
Hours: 6:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday
Route types: Demand response and fixed
Phone Number: (918) 732-7909
Location: 2700 Alligator Trail in Okmulgee, Oklahoma

MCN Transit

Year started: 2005
Transportation Director: Charley LaSarge
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Hours: 6:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday
Route types: Demand response and fixed
Phone Number: (918) 732-7909
Location: 2700 Alligator Trail in Okmulgee, Oklahoma

MCN tribal jurisdictional area

(MCN tribal jurisdictional area)
Situated in the lush, rolling plains of northeastern Kansas, the Prairie Band Potawatomi (PBP) Nation had its origins in the Great Lakes region of the United States. Known as “Keepers of the Fire” the PBP Nation’s Transit system embodies the PBP Nation’s vision: “ensuring self-sufficiency that respects diversity and equality while working within the spirit of cooperation and fairness for a high standard of living and quality of life.”

Since 2006, the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Transit system has provided transit services within the 121.5 square miles of the reservation and all of Jackson County. Their goal is to provide the most effective, efficient, safest, and uninterrupted transportation service to all residents of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Reservation and Jackson County.

The transit system delivers people to work, medical appointments, recreation, nutrition, and educational services. The transit has 3 wheelchair-lift mini vans, which provide for specialized transportation assistance. According to Celeste Weber, transit coordinator, the PBP Transit works with the Kansas Rural Technical Assistance Program (RTAP) to provide driver trainings such as Defensive Driving, Drug & Alcohol Policies, and other safety trainings. The Prairie Band Potawatomi Fire Department provides First Aid and CPR training for the drivers, as well.

With future funding, Weber hopes to expand the hours of their services and possibly add fixed routes. (By K. Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from PBP Tribal website; Wikipedia.)

Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation Transit

**Year started:** 2006  
**Transit Coordinator:** Celeste Weber  
**Vehicle Revenue Miles per Year:** 250,411  
**Number of vehicles:** 6  
**Number of Drivers:** 3 Full Time - 1 Part Time  
**Website:** [www.pbpindiantribe.com](http://www.pbpindiantribe.com)  
**Transit Schedule:** 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday  
**Route types:** Demand response  
**Marketing efforts:** Brochures, newspaper ads, and promotional materials  
**Phone:** (785) 966-2995 or (866) 727-8181  
**Location:** 15185 K Road, Mayetta, KS 66509
Pelivan Transit & Northeast Oklahoma Tribal Transit Consortium

History- Pelivan Transit is a rural public transportation provider in northeastern Oklahoma, which was established by the Grand Gateway Economic Development Association in 1985. Grand Gateway is the region’s Council of Governments, with a range of duties that include regional planning, administration of the Area Agency on Aging, and provision of transportation services to a rural and aging population. Pelivan provides demand-response, curb-to-curb service and deviated, fixed-route transportation to various destinations: medical appointments, human service agencies, meal sites, social activities, and employment centers.

Pelivan has grown rapidly over the past 6 years, in part, because of recent partnerships with the Northeast Oklahoma and Cherokee National Tribal Transit Consortiums, which now contract with Pelivan for their tribal transit service. Other partnerships include health care organizations and private bus companies. In 6 years, Pelivan has grown from 20 to 90 employees.

The two consortia, composed of 10 local Native American Tribes, include the Cherokee Nation, Eastern Shawnee, Miami, Modoc, Ottawa, Peoria, Quapaw, Seneca-Cayuga, Shawnee, and Wyandotte. Pelivan assists the consortia in the completion of grant applications.

“By collaborating, we have a greater chance of sustained funding through federal grants,” stated Debbie McGlasson, Transit Director.

Pelivan’s other local collaborations include those with an adult day care center; a local hospital, tribal health clinics, and a veteran’s organization. Tyson Food, Inc., co-sponsors an employment route, as does the Mid-America Industrial Park in Pryor and Tulsa Port of Catoosa.

Pelivan’s transit director and the Indian National Council of Government’s (INCOG) mobility coordinator spearheaded a collaborative effort among six transit providers and the Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center to provide enhanced transportation service to veterans and other riders in a 26-county area. INCOG received VTCLI (Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative) grants in FYs 2011 and 2012, totaling more than $1 million, to fund a one-call, one-click center, simplifying access to transportation by providing one place to connect veterans, military members and their families, adults, and other

(continued on page 23)
Pelivan Transit (from page 22)

transportation disadvantaged populations to transportation.

Regarding marketing, McGlasson praised the team at National RTAP (Rural Technical Assistance Program) with providing a website builder and technical assistance. “Frank Connor at National RTAP has been a big help to us in getting the website set up and going,” she stated. McGlasson recommended National RTAP for any agency needing assistance in starting a website or changing their website to a more user-friendly format.

Looking to the future, work has already begun on a flexible fuel vehicle maintenance facility in Big, Cabin, Oklahoma. “We’re excited about building a new vehicle maintenance facility that includes CNG, tire battery and preventative maintenance services,” said McGlasson. “We’ll be working with a tire company owned by the Eastern Shawnee Tribe, Burggraf, to provide this service.”

McGlasson believes that the growth and success of Pelivan Transit is driven by the agency’s willingness and responsibility to help people and to provide quality service that is continuously improving. As illustrated by its larger vehicle fleet and expanded routes, Pelivan has succeeded in expanding ridership.

More importantly, driver and rider comments help Pelivan gauge the impact of its services. One 86-year-old rider stated that without Pelivan service, she wouldn’t be able to leave her house to volunteer. The ability of Pelivan to bridge the road to independence, while promoting wellness and quality of life is what keeps the staff at Pelivan focused on the road ahead.

(By K. Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from Pelivan Transit website and “Weaving it Together: A Tapestry of Transportation Funding for Older Adults,” an AARP Research Report.)

Back row: Brian Barger, Pelivan Assistant Director
Front: Cecil Barnes, route supervisor; Rachelle Ellsworth, CSR/dispatch; Lisa Boren, data coordinator; Debbie McGlasson, Pelivan Director
Seated: Suzie Barnes, dispatcher
Seminole Nation Transit Service

History - The history of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma began centuries ago when Spain first occupied the peninsula known as Florida in 1565 and discovered complex cultures sustained by hunting, fishing, farming, and raising stock. A diverse group of autonomous Tribes, these speakers of the “core language,” Mvkoke, came to be known as Seminole or “free people.” Although a large group of Seminole were able to remain in the Florida Everglades during the Indian removal Era and Seminole Wars, most were relocated to Indian Territory along with the other “Five Tribes” of the southeast.

Today, the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma is located in south-central Oklahoma, approximately 45 miles east of Oklahoma City and includes most of Seminole County. The county is a checkerboard of tribal trust property, Indian allotments, restricted Indian lands, and dependent Indian communities. Although the total enrollment of the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma is about 17,000 members, the Seminole County service population is 5,315 Tribal citizens, according to the Seminole Nation Tribal Enrollment Office.

“At least 20% of these families don’t have a vehicle,” said David Cook, Transit Director, Seminole Nation Transit. Seminole Nation Transit has been operating since 2007, with the mission “to provide safe, reliable transportation to all citizens of Seminole County. We dedicate ourselves to serve with pleasant attitudes in a manner consistent with our stewardship of the communities’ and tribe’s trust and resources.”

“Efficiency is key,” stated Cook. “We do our best to fill each route.”

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Although Cook just completed his first year at Seminole Nation transit, he is not new to the transportation business. As a former manager at Red Carpet Charters in Oklahoma City, he noted, “Safety has always been a critical aspect of transportation.”

With future funding, Cook hopes to add cameras to buses to address safety concerns. Other items on his wish list include: the ability to move to more fixed routes, the installation of bus shelters, stronger partnerships with neighboring transit systems, and expansion of non-emergency medical transportation.

In the future, Cook hopes to bring in more businesses to Seminole County by improving the infrastructure for transit. “Giving someone an opportunity,” said Cook. “That’s what it’s all about.”

(By K. Sisco, SPTTAP, with contributions from the Seminole Nation of Oklahoma website and Wikipedia.)
Menominee Tribe in Wisconsin, a case for livability in small town America

The Menominee Tribe in rural Wisconsin partners with local schools and health providers to help residents navigate its sparse reservation while maintaining good stewardship of the land. The Tribe’s leaders have forged collaborations and created plans that are growing economies, benefiting people, and protecting the land and lifestyles treasured by residents and non-residents alike.

Menominee Regional Public Transit was established in 1982 because people needed help getting around the reservation and accessing services, according to Shawn Klemens, Menominee Transit Director.

Menominee Indian Tribe’s reservation includes almost 250,000 acres of largely rural and forested land near Green Bay, WI, and has a rich history in the state of Wisconsin, with a treaty dating back to 1854. With hundreds of miles of rivers and streams and dozens of native plant species, transportation was a significant challenge.

“We had so many people without vehicles, and with long distances to travel just to get to the nearest grocery store, transit made sense,” Klemens said.

More than 90 percent of the Tribal population of 3,200 uses Menominee Transit, and the service makes more than 80,000 trips every year.

“Good, efficient public transit is something that you don’t realize how important it is and how much it can help until you have it,” says Menominee Tribal Chairman Lisa Waukau. “We’re very proud of our transit system and the work it does everyday in helping people get to places like the doctor or to shop.”

While some rural communities face formidable threats – from job losses and shrinking populations to disappearing farmland and strained resources, those that make their areas more livable for their residents will reap lasting benefits.

Partnerships with the College of the Menominee Nation, as well as local schools, veterans’ services, Menominee County Human Services and other institutions help residents meet their unique needs while preserving precious natural resources.

(Sean Barry, Transportation for America, CTAA, and K. Sisco, SPTTAP)
For community and public transportation operators — regardless the mode or the service area — safety has always been the priority. Recent action by the United States Congress to include new transit safety requirements in the latest surface transportation law only reinforces this industry-wide commitment.

With the passage of MAP-21 in the summer of 2012, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) now has the authority to establish and enforce what it calls, “a new comprehensive framework to oversee the safety of public transportation.”

The rise of transit safety in the new surface transportation law catches no one by surprise. In the wake of several rail transit-related accidents involving passenger fatalities in Boston and Washington, D.C., congressional intent to provide safety oversight authority to FTA was well documented in the lead-up to MAP-21’s eventual passage. The only question was to what extent smaller city and rural transit bus operators would be impacted.

“We knew this was coming as part of the bill,” says CTAA’s Training Program Director Charles Dickson. “And we’ve already responded by tailoring the Association’s popular and successful safety-related training programs to the new requirements. We wanted to get ahead of these new requirements and help our members do the same.” What’s more, the CTAA Board of Directors — at its fall meeting — formed a Safety Council to help guide the Association’s efforts in this vital arena.

“The Board’s new Safety Council will help guide the Association’s efforts in safety training, certification and accreditation,” says CTAA Board President Ann Gilbert. “Providing the safest possible transportation has always been a priority for those of us in the community transit industry, and this new council emphasizes this priority.”

**Section 5329: Public Transportation Safety Program**

With President Obama signing MAP-21 into law on July 6, the FTA entered unchartered territory with its new safety authority. Section 5329 is clear in that it covers all states and designated recipients — basically any operator that receives federal investment. The Secretary of Transportation is imbued with the authority to inspect and audit all public transit systems with respect to safety; to make reports and issue directives; to investigate accidents and incidents; and, among others, to issue regulations to carry out transit safety provisions.

For CTAA members, each will now be required to have a public transportation agency safety plan in place in order to draw down federal transit dollars, though the actual specifics of what these plans must contain has not yet been revealed.

MAP-21 describes the contents of a plan thusly:

- The board of directors (or equivalent entity) must approve the agency safety plan;
- The plan must include methods for identifying and evaluating safety risks throughout all elements of the agency;
- The plan must cover strategies to minimize the exposure of the public, agency personnel and property to hazards and unsafe conditions;
- A process and timeline for reviewing and updating the safety plan annually must be in place;

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CTAA’s Safety Training Programs (from page 27)

- Safety performance targets — as will be established by the FTA, in consultation with the transit community — must be part of the plan;
- Each agency must have an adequately trained safety officer who reports to the general manager; and,
- The plan must include a comprehensive staff training program for operations personnel and personnel directly responsible for safety.

On October 12, FTA issued preliminary guidance on the new program (link: http://www.fta.dot.gov/grants/12853.html) which covered its intention to develop an interim safety certification program by January 1, 2013, which will be in effect until the agency promulgates its final rule.

CTAA Swings Into Action
Almost immediately after MAP-21 passed into law, CTAA met with its key safety training partners around the nation to develop a response. “Much of what the law prescribes matches up with what we’ve been offering in terms of transit safety for years,” says Lazaro-Noel’s Ream Lazaro, a primary Association training partner. “It was clear that in the case of transit agencies that had already undergone training and developed processes and individuals tuned to safety, that the transition under MAP-21 would be smooth.”

A prime element in MAP-21’s new transit safety rules is the establishment of a safety officer at each transit system. CTAA’s Certified Safety and Security Officer (CSSO) certification program is an ideal program to train and develop this important position.

The Association’s Insurance Store partners — Arthur J. Gallagher & Company — also believe that community and public transportation systems that engage in the entirety of the CTAA safety training, certification and accreditation continuum are likely to see reduced insurance premiums.

The mission of this Certified Safety and Security Officer Program is to assist in improving the professional preparedness of public and community transportation officers, and to maximize their ability to provide safe and secure transit service.

This mission is undertaken through preparing officers to:
- Perform an assessment of existing operations
- Identify system strengths
- Identify areas for improvement, and
- Develop safety, security and emergency preparedness programs.

The program is designed to help officers build the transportation organization, enhance the professionalism of its internal team, safely serve its customers, fulfill its responsibilities in assisting in community emergency preparedness, identify internal safety and security strengths and weaknesses, and reduce system exposure to liability. The certification is valid for three years and can be renewed online at www.ctaa.org/recertification.

To help transit agencies further meet their system safety goals and come into compliance with the forthcoming federal transit guidelines, CTAA has launched the Community Transportation Safety and Security Accreditation (CTSSA) program, which is designed to promote the safety and security of the customers of community and public transportation systems and also to promote the safety and security of the women and men

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who deliver these services and provide mobility for the riding public every day.

CTAA is accomplishing this goal by working with member agencies, our board of directors, and experts in the field to determine standards for safety and security and by developing a program to assess an organization’s achievement in meeting those standards.

CTAA offers the Certified Safety and Security Officer (CSSO) and the Community Transportation Safety and Security Accreditation (CTSSA) programs to provide transit systems with the comprehensive set of tools necessary to meet this critical safety, security, and emergency preparedness responsibility and to recognize individual and agency mission accomplishments.

As a partner to the Federal Transit Administration's Bus Safety and Security Memorandum of Understanding, CTAA has developed the CSSO and CTSSA programs as a two-part process to provide education, support, and recognition to individuals and transit organizations in the critical areas of safety and security.

MAP-21’s new public transportation safety program represents a significant administrative challenge to the FTA, as well as an important opportunity for community and public transit agencies to do what they have always done: provide their services in the most safe manner possible.

The Association’s training, certification and accreditation programs can help you not only meet these new regulations, but also to hone your agency’s safety environment, and save on your next insurance premium.

“We’re confident that our members have long provided safe transportation for their communities and passengers,” says CTAA’s Dickson. “Our safety training programs will allow them to get ahead of the rules in terms of compliance, and to be sure they’re doing all they can in the name of safety.”

(From the CTAA, the Community Transportation Association of America)
Upcoming Transit Events 2014

Oklahoma Transit Association Winter Meeting
in Oklahoma City, OK
January 29-31

Southwest Transit Association Conference
in San Antonio, TX
February 2-5

Emergency Preparedness for Dispatchers and Schedulers in Oklahoma City, OK
February 13-14

NTI Transit Trainers Workshop
in Long Beach, CA
March 30

10th National Conference on Asset Management
in Miami, FL
April 28

Bus and Paratransit Conference
in Kansas City, MO
May 4-7

CTAA Conference and EXPO
in St. Paul, MN
June 8-13
TRIBAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (TTAP) CENTERS

Alaska TTAP
University of Alaska
4280 Geist Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709
Phone (907) 474-1580
Fax (907) 474-5208
Email: Byron.Bluehorse@alaska.edu

Four Corners TTAP
Colorado State University
1270 Campus Delivery
Ft. Collins, CO 80523
Phone (970) 491-8653
Fax (970) 491-3502
Email: Ron.Hall@business.colostate.edu

Northern Plains TTAP
United Tribes Technical College
315 University Drive
Bismarck, ND 58504
Phone (701) 255-3285
Fax (701) 530-0623
Email: dtrusty@uttc.edu

Western TTAP
National Indian Justice Center
5250 Aero Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone (707) 579-5507
Fax (707) 579-9019
Email: tcoord@nijc.org

Michigan Tech TTAP
Michigan Technology University
301- E Dillman Hall
1400 Townsend Dr
Houghton, MI 49931
Phone (888) 230-0688
Email: jvelat@mtu.edu

Southern Plains TTAP
Oklahoma State University
5202 N. Richmond Hill Dr.
Stillwater, OK 74076
Phone (405) 744-6049
Fax (405) 744-7268
Email: jim.self@okstate.edu

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Regional Tribal Technical Assistance Program Centers

Alaska TTAP  http://www.uaf.edu/attap/

TTAP at Colorado State University  http://ttap.colostate.edu/


Northern Plains TTAP  http://www.uttc.edu/about/forum/ttap/

Northwest TTAP  http://www.ewu.edu/nwttap.xml

Southern Plains TTAP  http://ttap.okstate.edu

Western TTAP  http://www.nijc.org/ttap.html

Tribal Technical Assistance Program (TTAP) Centers

- Training and technology transfer resource for Native American tribes in the United States.
- Funded by FHWA and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.