



SMALL URBAN & RURAL TRANSIT CENTER

Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute • North Dakota State University

2007 ANNUAL

REPORT





Small Urban & Rural Transit Center • Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute • North Dakota State University
P.O. Box 5074 • Fargo, ND 58105 • Tel: 701.231.7766 • Fax: 701.231.1945 • www.surtc.org

North Dakota State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, Vietnam Era Veterans status, sexual orientation, marital status or public assistance status. Direct inquiries to the Executive Director and Chief Diversity Officer, 202 Old Main (701) 231-7708.

(cover photo credit: Beto, Flickr.com)

From the Director	1
SURTC Celebrates Five Years.....	2
Advisory Board Endorses Center’s Work, Raises New Issues	2
SURTC News	4
Research	6
Education.....	10
Training and Outreach	14
Research Reports.....	20
Journal Articles	20
Staff Presentations	21
Professional Involvement	23



CONTENTS

Research Staff



Jill Hough
Director



Gary Hegland
Training Coordinator



Jeremy Mattson
Associate Research Fellow



Del Peterson
Associate Research Fellow



David Ripplinger
Associate Research Fellow



Jon Mielke
Associate Research Fellow



Carol Wright
Associate Director
Training and Outreach

Faculty Affiliates

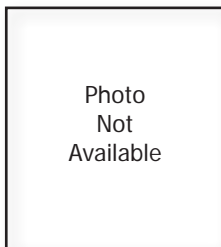


Jim Miller
Faculty Affiliate



Cindy Urness
Faculty Affiliate

Support Staff



Susan Hendrickson
Administrative
Assistant



Patrick Nichols
Web Communications
Manager



Dustin Ulmer
Web Technician

Student Support



Natalie Easterday
Graduate Research
Assistant



Yan Wang
Graduate Research
Assistant

From the Director



An eternity and an instant. That's how long the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center's first five years have seemed. Wasn't it just yesterday that Gene Griffin, director of our parent organization, the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, and I were pitching an idea for a center dedicated to personal mobility in small communities and rural areas? Wasn't it earlier this week that we were pounding the pavement in Bismarck and Washington, D.C., drumming up support and listening to ideas?

At the same time, it seems like it's been a hundred years since we launched our first research project and hosted our first training session. We've covered so much ground since then.

In reality, SURTC is five years old. We celebrated our official anniversary on April 30, 2007. It was a time to look back at our accomplishments and to look forward to our future. Our anniversary would not have been possible without the many people who have helped us on our journey. From advisory board members, transit agency directors and state officials to federal officials, members of Congress, and transit riders, all played key roles in our success to date. SURTC's talented staff can claim much of the credit too. They've taken the ideas and concerns of our clients and developed them into a well-organized and nationally recognized program of research, education, training, and outreach.

This annual report, focusing on our fifth anniversary year, documents our accomplishments for 2007. As in previous years, our research program forms the foundation of our work. You'll read about our efforts to help manufacturers develop a new vehicle specifically for small transit agencies. We studied ways to make rural school transportation more efficient, how tribal transit agencies can better meet the needs of their clients, and how agencies of all kinds can better work together in providing transit.

We continue to offer an academic transit class to students across the nation. In this report, we feature profiles of two of our graduate students. The vitality and creativity of students will be critical to our future success.

Perhaps the most significant change in this report since last year is the number of pages devoted to training and outreach. In response to the needs of our stakeholders and at the direction of our Advisory Board, we've dramatically increased the number and variety of our outreach activities. Our staff members have traveled from Anchorage, Alaska, to small towns across the Dakotas to provide information on topics ranging from transit operations to bus safety.

We recognize that our first five years are just a beginning. Mobility hasn't gotten any easier for people in small urban and rural areas. We're confident that the staff we've assembled, the momentum we've achieved and the network of colleagues and friends we've established will help us address the challenges of the next five years and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gene Griffin".

SURTC Celebrates Five Years



SURTC celebrated its fifth anniversary April 30 with a brunch at the NDSU Alumni Center with Federal Transit Administration Deputy Associate Administrator Ron Hynes as the featured guest and speaker. About 40 people attended the brunch.

In his remarks, Hynes praised SURTC and its accomplishments. “Universities can be a real-time laboratory for us,” he said, explaining that research units like SURTC can help the FTA explore new concepts and technology.

“SURTC knows how we work at FTA, and they deliver in a number of ways,” Hynes said. “From reports on the Web to a prototype bus shelter you can actually sit in.”

Hynes also praised SURTC’s Advisory Board and strategic planning efforts. “You now have a strategic plan in place to be a leader in transit research,” he said. “SURTC is helping define transit solutions for rural and small urban areas.”

SURTC director Jill Hough outlined SURTC’s growth over its first five years, from an initial idea to a program with staff involved in a full complement of research, training, outreach, and education activities. “I’m very proud of our accomplishments during these past five years,” Hough said. “Demographic and industry trends indicate that mobility in small urban and rural areas will continue to be a growing challenge. There will be an increasing number of opportunities and challenges for us to address. Our work is just beginning.”

After the brunch, Hynes and Lisa Colbert, a transportation management specialist with the FTA, along with North Dakota DOT representatives, traveled to Valley City to visit South Central Transit Network. The officials rode the buses and were briefed by Pat Hanson, director of South Central Adult Services Council.

Advisory Board Endorses Center’s Work, Raises New Issues

The SURTC Advisory Board endorsed the Center’s projects and progress and provided national, regional and local insight on transit issues at its September meeting.

“The Advisory Board brings together transit professionals from agencies, state and federal government and other organizations,” notes SURTC director Jill Hough. “The input and insight they provide is very valuable in shaping our programs. They help keep us relevant and focused.”

The day-long meeting was held at the NDSU Alumni Center and included updates from SURTC staff on SURTC research, education, training and outreach projects. Advisory Board members were able to ask questions, provide feedback and give observations on many transit-related issues.

Ron Hynes, Deputy Associate Administrator of the Federal Transit Administration, complimented SURTC on its track record of completing projects on time while meeting objectives. He recalled his visit to SURTC and to Valley City to view rural transit during SURTC’s fifth anniversary celebration in May, noting that the experience has been useful as he worked with staff and transit agencies across the country.

Robert Padgette of the American Public Transportation Association also complimented SURTC's work. He noted that APTA is eager to collaborate with UGPTI to publish a special transit-focused issue of the *Journal of the Transportation Research Forum*. Hough is serving as guest editor for the issue.

Others attending the meeting included:

- Alan Abeson, Easter Seals Project ACTION
- Keven Anderson, Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Ron Baumgart, River Cities Public Transit, Pierre, SD
- Julie Bommelman, Metropolitan Area Transit, Fargo, ND
- Joe Dougherty, Cheyenne Transit Program, Cheyenne, WY
- Bruce Fuchs, North Dakota Department of Transportation
- Lyn Hellegard, Montana Transit Association
- Ryan Marshall, Utah Urban and Rural Specialized Transportation Association
- Jackie Mattheis, South Dakota Department of Transportation
- Jim Moench, North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Consortium
- Pam Ternes, Standing Rock Public Transportation, Fort Yates, ND
- Lori Van Beek, Metropolitan Area Transit, Moorhead, MN



At the meeting, a number of state transit officials and transit agency managers noted that added funds for transit in federal legislation had allowed them to purchase vehicles, build new facilities, add staff, and offer new services. Many of the agencies are seeing increased ridership.

That kind of growth was evident as the group toured the new Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Transit bus garage. The facility is less than a year old and consolidates bus storage and maintenance for the two cities.

The growth that transit agencies have experienced has not come without worry. Agency managers expressed apprehension about meeting coordination mandates, raising matching funds to obtain federal funding, providing training to keep employees current with safety requirements, and improving mobility of underserved clients such as the elderly.

“The input from the Advisory Board is critical as we set the agenda for our research, education, training, and outreach programs,” notes Hough. “We want our programs to continue to be as relevant as possible for rural and small urban transit operators.”

SURTC News

Mattson joins SURTC staff.



Jeremy Mattson joined the SURTC staff in October as an associate research fellow. Before joining SURTC, Mattson worked at NDSU as a research assistant in the Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics where he studied agricultural trade and farm policy. He earned his master's degree in agricultural economics from NDSU in 2000 and earned bachelor's degrees in economics and in management from the University of Minnesota, Morris, in 1998. Mattson, originally from Lake Park, MN, joined SURTC because of his interest in transportation research. His expertise in economics will contribute to a variety of SURTC research projects including an analysis of biodiesel use in transit buses. Mattson fills the position vacated by Xinyu (Jason) Cao who left SURTC in August to accept a faculty position at the University of Minnesota. Cao is now an assistant professor of urban and regional planning at the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs.

Ulmer named to web developer position.



SURTC graduate research assistant Dustin Ulmer was hired as a web developer by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute. Part of his time is focused on SURTC's NDinfo.org project. That project is focused on developing an online statewide transportation service directory. He is also working on a UGPTI project with the American Road and Transportation Builders Association to upgrade the website for the Federal Highway Administration's Local Technical Assistance Program. Ulmer began working for SURTC in 2003 as an intern. He received his bachelor's degree in management information systems with a minor in computer science from NDSU in the spring of 2004. He is continuing to work on his MBA.

SURTC director is guest editor of JTRF transit issue.

SURTC director Jill Hough will edit a special issue of the *Journal of the Transportation Research Forum* in 2008. The issue will focus exclusively on public transportation. This special issue is being published in partnership with the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). The issue is expected to be published in the fall of 2008 and will also be available on the Internet.

SURTC graduate assistant interns with FHWA.

Natalie (Beck) Easterday, SURTC graduate research assistant, was an intern with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as part of the Summer Transportation Internship Program for Diverse Groups (STIPDG) from June to August 2007. Easterday is an NDSU graduate student in emergency management and has been working with SURTC since the spring of 2006. As part of her internship, Easterday studied contraflow plans and operations by interviewing five transportation specialists from four gulf coast states. Contraflow plans are used to alter the normal flow of traffic to aid in an emergency evacuation situation. She also compiled an evacuation news story database. The database will act as a resource for future emergency management efforts relating to evacuation planning. In addition, Easterday wrote a paper that presented funding opportunities for state and local governments to host training exercises and emergency preparedness activities.

FTA administrator updated on SURTC activities.

SURTC director Jill Hough and UGPTI director Gene Griffin met with the FTA’s top official in January 2007 to give him a briefing on SURTC and UGPTI programs and activities. FTA administrator Jim Simpson “was very engaged and very enthused about the ideas we were presenting,” Hough notes. Before coming to the FTA, Simpson was commissioner of the New York State Metropolitan Transportation Authority where he served for 10 years on the Finance Committee and the New York City Transit Committee. “He comes from an urban background,” Hough notes, “so he was eager to gain additional perspective on rural and small urban transit issues.” Hough had originally met Simpson and arranged the January meeting through their involvement on the National Academy of Sciences’ Transit Cooperative Research Program Oversight and Project Selection Committee.



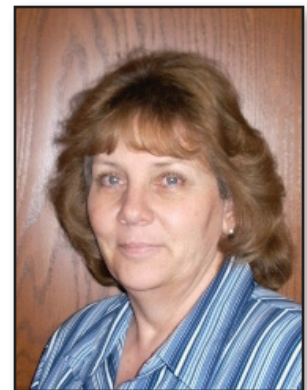
Hough invited to FTA safety meeting. SURTC director Jill Hough was an invited presenter at a Federal Transit Administration State Safety Oversight Program meeting in Minneapolis Sept. 17-20. Ninety-five representatives from rail transit agencies, state safety oversight agencies, federal agencies, universities and industry associations attended the meeting. The FTA’s State Safety Oversight program is designed to prevent public transportation fatalities, injuries, property damage, and system interruption and to ensure the capability of responding to any incidents. Hough and representatives from three other University Transportation Centers outlined their programs and described how they interact with the transit industry. “The invitation to attend was an endorsement of SURTC and its work,” Hough notes. “The FTA recognizes that our research and outreach can have a significant impact on the safety and security of transit agencies.”

SURTC welcomes new board members. Joe Dougherty of Wyoming and B. Leone Gibson of Utah joined the SURTC Advisory Board in 2007.



Joe Dougherty is the Transit Director in Cheyenne, WY, serving in that position since 2001. In 2003, the Cheyenne Transit Program was named the “Wyoming Transit Agency of the Year” and in 2006, Joe was named as “Wyoming Transit Administrator of the Year.” He currently serves as the President of the WYTRANS organization representing more than 52 transit providers throughout Wyoming.

B. Leone Gibson has been involved in managing federal and state human service programs for more than two decades in her native state of Utah. Gibson began her career in rural transit in 2001 with the Utah Department of Transportation as the FTA Section 5310 manager. In 2003, she was promoted to director of Transit Plans and Programs which includes oversight of FTA Sections 5304, 5310, 5311, 5316 and 5317. Leone is providing direction for the implementation of Utah’s Coordinated Human Service Public Transportation Plan as well as local transit studies. She has



been a board member of URSTA and provides advocacy and technical assistance. In 2005, she was appointed to serve on the Utah Commission on Aging to represent the interests of seniors related to transportation issues.

Research

Interactions with clients frequently bring to light issues and challenges faced by transit users and providers in small urban and rural communities. SURTC's research program focuses on those concerns. The research program has two major thrusts:

- *Addressing management and institutional issues faced by transit client groups*
- *Exploring technical and operating issues with a special emphasis in the intelligent transportation systems arena*

Many of SURTC's research reports are online at www.surtc.org/research/reports.php.

Examining the mobility of rural elderly women.



(photo credit: APTA)

SURTC director Jill Hough oversaw interviews with more than 1,000 women, half living in rural areas and half living in small urban areas, to assess their mobility concerns and needs. The research focused on women because their need for mobility is often particularly acute in rural areas. The SURTC study should help researchers and policy makers assess the mobility needs of rural elderly women. The research showed that those with high levels of mental acuity and self-efficacy (confidence in their abilities) tend to have an easier time of accomplishing desired mobility. Hough says community efforts to maintain services are important. Multi-purpose stores offering multiple services such as a pharmacy, grocery store and restaurant could help minimize travel needs. At the same time, community transit

efforts can play a key role. Finally, the research found that women's social networks are very important to mobility. Hough completed the research for her dissertation in the doctoral program at the University of California-Davis. Hough graduated June 14 with a Ph.D. in transportation technology and policy. Hough's dissertation is titled "Realized Travel Demand and Relative Desired Mobility of Elderly Women Living in Rural and Small Urban North Dakota."

SURTC examines transit at SDSU. South Dakota State University may be an NDSU rival on the football field, but SDSU and its home city of Brookings, SD, have been looking to NDSU and SURTC to make its transit system a winner. The Brookings Area Transit Authority (BATA) asked SURTC to explore possible opportunities to provide better transit service to students. SURTC researcher Dave Ripplinger developed a survey to gather information from SDSU students, faculty, and staff; attended public meetings; and sought the guidance of an advisory board. The study recommends that BATA phase-in new fixed route transit services to meet the needs of SDSU. Other considerations include: beginning two circulator routes; providing services on the weekend;

charging a \$2/credit hour fee for students; using a UPASS program; implementing a fare of \$1 or \$2 per ride for non-students; reaching out to other entities to build support; and raising matching funds for operations and capital.

City of Brookings study. Based on the results of the campus transit research, the City of Brookings asked SURTC to help identify gaps between transportation needs and services in Brookings. The study was motivated by a desire among members of the Brookings City Council to revisit the city’s role in providing community transportation, including the process of allocating local funds to support transportation service providers. “The study did not identify any significant gaps in service, but did note certain areas that would benefit from ongoing attention,” Ripplinger says. “These areas include service to areas of the city that are growing and opportunities that may arise to increase social welfare through expanded or coordinated transportation services.”

Building a better bus. SURTC worked with the Federal Transit Administration to bring together bus manufacturers, bus equipment manufacturers, transit agencies, paratransit agencies and others to design a better small bus. The effort grew out of a study of the bus manufacturing industry conducted by SURTC and supported by the FTA. The study was aimed at identifying incentives to adopt new technologies and the impact that standardization of bus specifications would have on production efficiency and cost, according to SURTC researcher Del Peterson. The study resulted in four basic recommendations for the industry: improve coordination of procurement procedures; consider all factors, not just costs, while planning procurements; view the small bus market as three separate segments to better optimize use of vehicles in each segment; develop a procurement resource that includes industry standards for small transit vehicles.

Getting to school on time and on budget. With fewer children spread over a wider area, many rural school districts face a significant challenge in getting students to school efficiently. “At the same time, there has been some interest in using school buses to provide public transit to non-pupil community residents. There may be opportunities to enhance both mobility and efficiency in rural communities,” says researcher Dave Ripplinger. He developed a system for small rural schools that could also be used by small transit operations. The system was piloted in the Enderlin School District. Part of that effort was to look for opportunities to use school buses for other community transportation. Ripplinger noted that computerized routing tools can be used to test routes or to evaluate the addition or removal of buses of various sizes from the fleet. The tools can also be used to evaluate the impact of consolidation on student transportation. Although significant obstacles such as legal and liability issues must be overcome for school transportation fleets to be used for other community transportation efforts, it is obvious that computerized routing tools could be used to facilitate such arrangements.



Tribal transit needs assessment. SURTC researchers Jon Mielke and David Ripplinger conducted a needs assessment to help identify the Indian reservations across the nation most in need of transit services. The assessment identified tribal transit needs for the distribution of funding under the 2005 SAFETEA-LU federal highway bill. This bill created a new program (5311c) to provide funding for tribal transit services in non-metropolitan areas. There are approximately 332 federally recognized Indian tribes in the lower 48 states. The tribal needs assessment provides a good starting point to identify areas of high need using census based demographic data related to mobility dependent populations such as seniors and the disabled.

What do ‘small urban’ and ‘rural’ really mean? When it comes to using the terms “rural” and “urban” in discussions about public policy and research related to transit, perceptions are important. “What ‘rural’ means to most people in Washington, DC, means something significantly different to people on the Great Plains or the Mountain West,” notes researcher David Ripplinger. He worked with graduate research assistant Natalie Easterday and SURTC director Jill Hough to examine USDA, U.S. Census Bureau and FTA data to find definitions. They used those definitions to develop a transit-specific set of classifications. The two-part classification will help distinguish rural areas within counties that may otherwise be classified as urban because they contain an urban center. Ripplinger is now looking at what transit services exist within the different classifications across the country.



Study completed on transportation and apartment choice. Researchers Xinyu Cao and Jill Hough interviewed about 400 apartment dwellers in the Fargo to learn how the availability of various forms of transportation influences the residential choices of apartment dwellers. The results will offer direction for transit planners examining the location of apartment dwellers; urban planners determining where to zone and build apartments; and property managers deciding how to price and market apartments.

Biodiesel use in Fargo-Moorhead MAT buses. SURTC is teaming up with the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Transit (MAT) to determine how beneficial biodiesel fuels really are. MAT has been using biodiesel mixed fuels in its buses for more than a year. Researcher Del Peterson says the study will determine the overall effect biodiesel blended fuel has had on MAT’s

bus fleet as well as the auxiliary effect on the Fargo-Moorhead community. Attributes such as fuel economy, ridership, emissions and service records will be analyzed. SURTC is reviewing the current state of biodiesel use in public transportation nationwide to use as a comparison for MAT’s experience.

Fuel price increases prompt study proposal. An almost universal concern among transit agencies is the rising cost of fuel and the effect it will have on budgets. “Those prices drive increased ridership, but they also substantially increase operating costs,” notes SURTC director

Jill Hough. Researcher Jeremy Mattson is heading up a research project that will collect data from transit agencies and develop a computer model to estimate the effect of gas prices on bus ridership. Ideally, data would be collected from various types of transit agencies including those that run shorter routes with greater ridership in larger towns and those that operate longer routes with fewer passengers in rural areas. The research was launched in part as a response to concerns raised at SURTC's Advisory Board meeting. "The results of the study would provide insight on the ability of transit agencies to survive under rising fuel costs," Mattson says. "Will fare revenue increase enough to cover costs? If not, what are acceptable options? Increased fares? Reduced service? More efficient vehicles?"

"The results of the study would provide insight on the ability of transit agencies to survive under rising fuel costs," Mattson says.

Coordination in southwest North Dakota. SURTC and the NDDOT are working together to explore possibilities for region-wide coordinated transportation in southwestern North Dakota. "This is a very sparsely populated area and the people there are very open to exploring transportation options," says SURTC researcher Dave Ripplinger. The vision is for all transit providers in the region including schools, private operators, human services, and transit agencies, to coordinate services. Right now, Ripplinger is identifying transportation needs and resources to determine how they match up. A project working group from the region is guiding the work. "We're looking at what a transit service needs to do to facilitate the process of co-mingling riders," he says. The study will also identify appropriate technology that may include a centralized facility, computers, and scheduling, reservation, and dispatching systems that will be required to make such a coordinated transportation operation work.

Revising North Dakota's state transit management plan. SURTC specialists are helping the NDDOT refine its statewide transit management plan to better reflect state-specific regulations and requirements for transit operations. SURTC helped the agency complete a major rewrite of the plan last year. "The focus of that effort was on requirements for federal funding," notes Carol Wright, SURTC associate director for training. "This version of the plan will reflect NDDOT and other state regulations as well as some updates to the federal regulations." Every state is required by the Federal Transit Administration to have a statewide plan. "This plan should be a valuable tool for state officials as well as for transit managers to assure they are complying with requirements of their major funding providers," Wright says.

Setting research agenda for human service transport. The Community Transportation Association of America's National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation relied on SURTC expertise in January 2008 when it convened its national Human Service Transportation Research Summit in Washington, D.C. The summit drew together representatives from industry, government, and academia to participate in a series of activities aimed at identifying and prioritizing research opportunities in the field. The activities were facilitated by SURTC staff members including Jill Hough, Jim Miller, Jeremy Mattson, and David Ripplinger. SURTC used the results from the activities to author a national research agenda. The center anticipates that organizations such as the Federal Transit Administration, the Transit Cooperative Research Program, University Research Centers and others will use the agenda to guide their research investments.

Education

Budget challenges, competition, new regulations, advanced technology as well as changing demands and demographics make managing public transit challenging and complex. Consequently, education is a significant part of SURTC's efforts. The Center's educational goals focus on developing tomorrow's transit professionals. Primary goals include:

- *Teaching a university graduate course in public transportation*
- *Working with other faculty members to incorporate public transit into their curricula*

The following section includes profiles on two graduate students working with SURTC. Their efforts have had a significant positive impact on SURTC's work, and we anticipate that they will continue to apply their talents and skills on behalf of the transit industry.



Student takes an interest in transit emergency management.

Looking forward with excitement, Natalie (Beck) Easterday is preparing for the next phase of her career. Whether that phase is the continuation of her education or, ultimately, a position in emergency management, Easterday's experience with SURTC will have played a significant role.

An NDSU master's student in emergency management, Easterday has been working with SURTC since the spring of 2006, first as an undergraduate and now as a graduate research assistant. An undergraduate course piqued her interest in emergency management. "When I started working for SURTC, I began to see how transit and emergency management fit together," she says. "Before working at SURTC, I hadn't even considered a career relating to transportation."

As of spring semester 2008, Easterday is in her last semester of graduate courses and plans to finish her thesis by August. Her thesis addresses the use of public transportation for evacuation, a topic that will likely be the focus of her planned Ph.D. studies in the future.

Easterday considers Fargo to be her hometown. She earned a bachelor's degree in business administration at NDSU with a minor in child development and family science.

While at SURTC, she has worked on a variety of projects. She examined the planning differences between rural and urban communities with regard to the use of public transportation in emergency operations, and she is currently mapping the transit agencies in North Dakota as part of the NDinfo.org web database. She has also become SURTC's student expert on the use of geographic information system (GIS) software.

SURTC director Jill Hough says, "Natalie is an enjoyable student that loves to learn and has worked diligently on a number of studies, particularly those requiring geographic information systems. She is a great worker, and her perspective and creativity make her an asset to our team."

From June to August 2007, Easterday was an intern with the Federal Highway Administration as part of the Summer Transportation Internship Program for Diverse Groups. "Under the direction of the Emergency Transportation Operation (ETO) team, I was able to connect transportation concepts with emergency management. I had the opportunity to gain valuable experience as well as network with a variety of professionals," she says.

As part of her internship, Easterday studied contraflow plans and operations by interviewing five transportation specialists from four Gulf Coast states. Contraflow plans are used to alter the normal flow of traffic during emergency evacuations. Many states in southeastern United States have adopted hurricane evacuation plans that use contraflow to increase the number of available outbound lanes.

Easterday also compiled an evacuation news story database which will act as a resource for future emergency management efforts relating to evacuation planning.

Most recently, Easterday was honored as the University Transportation Centers' 2007 Outstanding Student of the Year during the Transportation Research Board's 87th Annual Meeting held in Washington, D.C., in January 2008. Easterday was nominated by SURTC and received the award on the basis of her excellent communications skills and her academic contributions.

"I was very surprised by the recognition. Being named the Outstanding Student of the Year is a great award. I enjoyed being at the meeting and having the opportunity to talk with other students from different universities, and share our experiences," Easterday says.

Attending the TRB meeting also gave Easterday the opportunity to attend a subcommittee on emergency planning in transportation. "I found it really interesting, and I was very impressed by the progressive research being done in the area," Easterday says.

Newly married and nearing graduation, Easterday is looking forward to the next step in her career path. Easterday says, "My time with SURTC has taught me many things and has given me great opportunities. Working with SURTC has been an invaluable experience, and I hope to carry my interest in transportation into the next phase of my career."



Student's programming and engineering skills enhance SURTC work.

In the future, when North Dakota students cross the countryside in a bus on the way to school, they may have SURTC graduate student and computer programmer Yan Wang to thank that their ride isn't longer.

Since joining SURTC in August of 2005, Wang has programmed her way through research projects including one focused on developing efficient school bus routes. She has also helped develop a school transportation management system with public transportation capabilities.

Her programming expertise also was used extensively on the NDinfo.org project. That project's website will enable individuals to access information about available transit services across the state.

Jill Hough, SURTC director, says, "Yan is a highly skilled programmer, and she has enhanced several of our projects through her level of competency. Her skill set has broadened the kinds of work that we can do."

Originally from Chengcheng in the Shaanxi Province of China, Wang is an NDSU master's student studying computer science and planning to graduate in December 2008. Her interests include developing Web, database and computer security applications. Her thesis study includes research on wireless sensor networks.

"I decided to pursue a master's degree in computer science in 2005, and I decided to come to NDSU because I was interested in the operation research group of the NDSU computer science department," says Wang.

Prior to coming to NDSU, Wang earned B.S. and M.A. degrees in engineering from Chang An University in China and worked as a software engineer. “I love engineering. It is my main interest,” says Wang.

While earning her engineering degree from Chang An University, Wang took many courses related to transportation. Upon arriving at NDSU, she saw an advertisement for a graduate research assistant with SURTC and thought it would be a great opportunity to develop her programming skills.

Although Wang is unsure of her future career plans, she is certain that her time at SURTC will influence her career decisions and achievements. “I have learned a lot about the ArcGIS application, Google Map, and have gained much project experience. The work I’ve done with SURTC is very valuable to me,” says Wang.

SURTC helps plan seminars. SURTC played a significant role in a series of seminars launched by its parent organization, the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at NDSU. The seminars were offered during the spring and fall semesters of 2007 and are being offered again during the spring semester of 2008. Several of the seminars have focused on transit and personal mobility issues and some have featured SURTC staff. SURTC director Jill Hough is coordinating the series. Seminar presenters included the following:



David Ripplinger Del Peterson Gary Hegland Jill Hough Dave Leftwich Patricia Mokhtarian

Dave Ripplinger, SURTC researcher, reviewed his work with various agencies related to “Organizing Transit in Small Urban and Rural Areas.” His seminar was March 12, 2008.

Del Peterson, SURTC researcher, detailed his work with the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Transit to document effects of “Biodiesel Use in Fargo-Moorhead MAT Buses.” The seminar was Feb. 20, 2008.

Gary Hegland, SURTC outreach and training coordinator, discussed “Risk Management in Transit” during his Feb. 6, 2008, seminar.

Jill Hough, SURTC director, presented the findings of “Realized Travel Demand of Elderly Women” at the Dec. 5, 2007, seminar.

Dave Leftwich, Local Government Division, North Dakota Department of Transportation, presented “Why Does the North Dakota Department of Transportation Do Planning?” on Nov. 28, 2007.

Patricia L. Mokhtarian, University of California, Davis, presented “When is Getting There Half the Fun? Understanding the Positive Utility of Travel” on Nov. 14, 2007. Mokhtarian is a professor of civil and environmental engineering, associate director for education of the Institute of Transportation Studies, and chair of the interdisciplinary graduate program in Transportation Technology and Policy.



Jon Mielke



Rick Kasper



Wade Kline



Jim Miller



Carol Wright



Xinyu (Jason) Cao

Jon Mielke, SURTC associate research fellow, presented “Using Census Data to Quantify Public Transportation Needs” on Oct. 24, 2007.

Rick Kasper, president and chief operating officer of Global Electric Motors, LLC (GEM), presented “Ten Years in the NEV Business: The Top Ten Success Factors.” His Oct. 17, 2007, presentation encompassed a ‘Top Ten’ list of key growth and success factors for the evolving Neighborhood Electric Vehicle Industry (NEV).

David Ripplinger, SURTC researcher, presented an overview of his study, “What does Rural and Small Urban Really Mean? A Methodological Approach,” on Sept. 26, 2007.

Wade Kline, community development planner for the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments, presented the “Sub-Area Transit Planning Metro Area Transit: Moorhead Expansion & Alignment Study,” on Sept. 19, 2007.

Jim Miller, SURTC affiliated faculty, presented the seminar “Demand and Cost Models for Small Urban and Rural Transit: Do They Really Work?” on Sept. 12, 2007.

Carol Wright, SURTC’s associate director for training and outreach, presented “Common Pitfalls of Writing.” Her Sept. 5, 2007, presentation identified some of the most common errors of academic writing.

Del Peterson, SURTC researcher, presented an overview of “Advanced Small Transit Vehicle Study.” The April 27, 2007, seminar focused on his work to identify the vehicle characteristics most desired by small transit operations.

Xinyu (Jason) Cao, SURTC researcher provided “Practical Tips for Journal-Style Scientific Writing” in his April 13, 2007, seminar.

SURTC continues to offer transit course. SURTC continues to introduce transit to college students via its “Public Transportation” course. The course is offered by NDSU and broadcast to students across the nation through the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute’s Transportation Learning Network, an interactive network that employs video, the Internet, and other learning technologies. The three-credit course covers concepts and models used in both urban and rural transit industry settings. Issues such as policy, government’s role in transit, transit planning, demand forecasting, performance evaluation, and system costing are discussed. SURTC director Jill Hough is the instructor for the course. Students work on projects directly related to transit systems and are introduced to employment opportunities in transit. Transit professionals may also use the network to sit in on all or parts of the course. The technology also allows SURTC to



tap the expertise of experts in federal agencies, transit organizations and other universities. “Guest speakers from a variety of transit agencies will provide students with a solid foundation of industry functioning as well as a glimpse at the breadth and depth of the field,” notes Hough.

SURTC is home to multi-state RTAP library. Since 2004, SURTC has maintained a combined

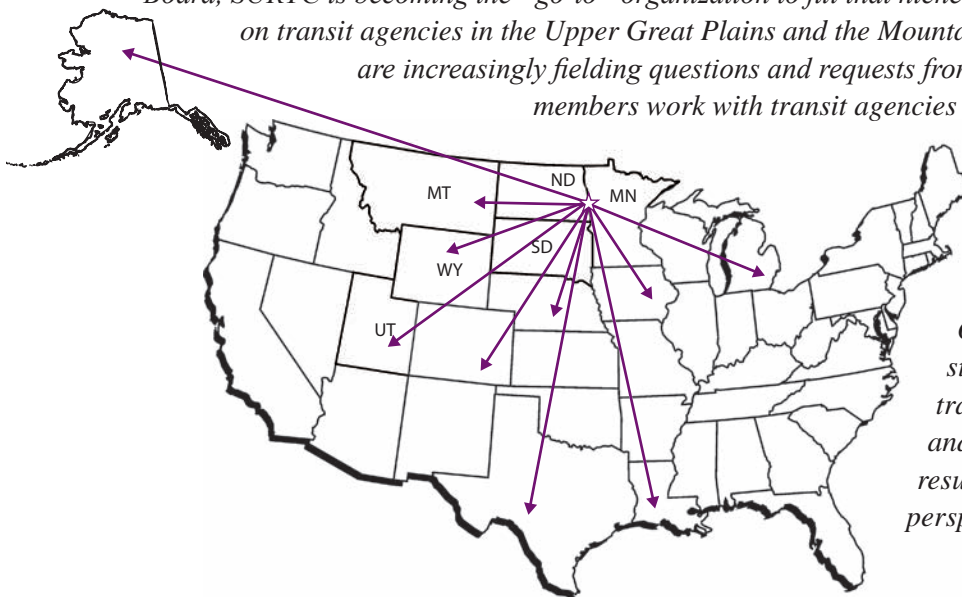


Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) library for Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota. Department of transportation administrators in each state felt a combined library could be more easily kept up to date and combined investment from each state could be better utilized to purchase and maintain material in the library. An online checkout system allows easy access to this enhanced library. The Web-based catalog allows transit operators to easily search the inventory and check out needed journals, research reports, videos, publications and other material. A committee with two representatives from each of the three states supporting the library sets policy and provides guidance for library acquisitions, inventory and management. RTAP is a program of the Federal Transit Administration.

Ph.D. enhances SURTC academic program. When SURTC director Jill Hough received her doctorate from the University of California–Davis June 14, 2007, SURTC’s academic program took a step forward. Hough’s Ph.D. in transportation technology and policy opens the door for her to teach and advise masters and doctoral level students. She is now teaching the graduate-level TL786 “Public Transportation” course at NDSU. “Qualified teaching faculty is essential to success as the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute and SURTC continue to build their academic programs,” says Gene Griffin, director of the UGPTI.

Training and Outreach

Because of budget, time and location challenges, small urban and rural transit organizations often struggle to give their staff access to training and outreach programs. At the direction of its Advisory Board, SURTC is becoming the “go-to” organization to fill that niche. While the focus remains on transit agencies in the Upper Great Plains and the Mountain West, staff members are increasingly fielding questions and requests from across the nation. Staff members work with transit agencies and organizations to address



issues and opportunities. These efforts result in new training programs and help identify topics for additional research. Outreach efforts put SURTC staff in direct contact with transit managers, employees, and their operations. As a result, SURTC brings real-world perspective to its work.

SURTC Expands Training and Outreach Efforts

In the past year the tide has turned for SURTC's training and outreach programs.

"In the past we worked to convince people, 'Here's what we can come and do for you,'" notes Carol Wright, associate director of outreach and training. "Now we have agencies seeking us out and asking us to come and do training. Many of the places where we've done training are looking for opportunities to have us come back."

Wright joined the staff in 2006, doubling the number of staff that SURTC had dedicated to training. Gary Hegland has been with SURTC almost from its earliest days in 2002. "Having two of us here has increased our capacity for programming," Hegland says. Last year SURTC held 28 training sessions with nearly 600 participants. Training was provided in Alaska, Nebraska, Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and the Dakotas. Most were conducted by Hegland and Wright.

In addition to return visits to those states, there are new training sessions on the calendar in 2008 for Iowa, Texas, Louisiana, Montana and Minnesota. "We are moving outside of our main region," Wright says. "That's in response to our strategic planning effort that suggested that we become the 'go-to' source for transit training in small urban and rural areas across the nation."

"However, our priority remains with our region. We're committed to attending our region's state transit conferences. Our clients will see us and know that they have access to us. The kind of small urban and rural transit systems that exist in this region is the heart and soul of who we are," Wright says.

SURTC's outreach and training programs are focused on the organization's goals of:

- Enhancing public transportation systems in small urban and rural communities
- Improving accessibility and mobility in small urban and rural communities
- Fostering and facilitating information exchange among transit stakeholders and decision makers
- Contributing to the body of knowledge in transit

"Every time we give a training session, we hear stories, questions, and situations that we can draw upon as better examples to use in serving our clients whether through the development of new training programs, sharing insights and information, or creating linkages between similar transit operations in different parts of the country," Wright says.

As a result of its increased level of outreach, SURTC staff members have developed a list of contacts for transit training. "If someone's already doing a good job, we'll refer clients to them. But if an agency has a request and no one is providing training on that topic, we take that back and try to build programming on those requests."

In addition to fielding requests for training sessions, Hegland and Wright also receive many calls from transit managers looking for advice and information related to specific transit management issues. "We're tracking those calls, and if there is a particular issue generating a lot of interest, we'll explore that as a training topic," she says. Training programs on the drawing board include: accident investigation, defensive driving for bus drivers, dispatcher training and advanced transit management.

Wright and Hegland are also looking at new technology such as computer-based instruction and other distance education techniques as well as keypad response devices. Those technologies will help them reach new audiences and to keep audiences fully engaged. "We're not only looking at new topics, but new methods to reach course participants as well," Hegland says.

“We are very excited about the opportunities that exist for our programs,” Wright says. “Our training tends to be very hands-on. It’s information that people can take home and put to use immediately. That’s important to us because we know that we’re making a difference.”

Intro to transit management course offered. Learning by doing is often the way transit



managers learn their job, but it may not be the most effective and efficient way to manage a small transit agency. SURTC developed an “Introduction to Transit Management” course to teach new transit managers the basics of operating a transit agency. It’s also for others in the transit industry who want to expand their knowledge, says Carol Wright, SURTC associate director for training. The course is available nationally and is designed to provide a broad-based knowledge of basic concepts related to transit operations, funding, record keeping, compliance issues and much more. SURTC’s goal is to develop a certificate program as part of the completion of course requirements.

Talking the transit talk. Transit managers, academics, consultants and government agencies may all be speaking English, but they may not be talking the same language when it comes to transit. That’s why SURTC compiled a Transportation Glossary and Resource Manual. The glossary is available on the SURTC web page at www.surtc.org under the “resources” tab. The glossary, compiled by Carol Wright, SURTC associate director for training and outreach, has more than 200 pages of benchmarks, broad explanations, as well as examples of how the terms are used and how they’re applied in the transit industry. The resource also includes information on a wide variety of federal and state transit programs and initiatives. Original sources are referenced so users can find additional information.

Tribal transit coordination workshop held. With support from the Mountain-Plains Consortium, SURTC planned a Transit Coordination Workshop specifically geared to Native American transit programs throughout North Dakota. The workshop was held June 25-26 in Bismarck. The two-day program detailed coordination mandates, benefits, the development of potential transportation partners within their service area, how to initiate coordination, and the continuation of ongoing efforts. Jon Mielke, Gary Hegland and Carol Wright from SURTC facilitated the workshop. The workshop was designed to help tribes meet provisions of the current federal highway bill, SAFETEA-LU, which require tribes to develop a plan for the coordination of their transportation services. The workshop also featured presenters from the N.D. Department of Transportation, the N.D. Department of Human Services, the United Tribes Technical College, the North Central Planning Council, Standing Rock Public Transportation, Rolette County Transportation, Trenton Indian Services, and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa.

SURTC conducts DOT training. SURTC conducted training for transit managers across the state on behalf of the NDDOT during the fall of 2007. The training helped transit agencies comply with new requirements to receive state and federal transit funding. The NDDOT had earlier contracted with SURTC to review and revise all of the applications and reports required for agencies to receive funds under Section 5311. Section 5311 funds are federal dollars funneled through the state to support transit agencies. “As a result of that work, the DOT scheduled training in several locations in the state to provide guidelines for completing the new forms,” explains Carol Wright, SURTC’s associate director for training and outreach. She also notes that the new federal highway bill has several new mandates for all small urban and rural transit projects. “For example, projects will

need to be reporting never-before required statistics which will be entered into the National Transit Database. This training prepared managers for those requirements including how to collect and report the statistics.”

NDinfo.org is an online transportation service directory. Through a contract with the N.D. Department of Transportation SURTC developed a state-wide online transportation service directory. “The NDinfo.org website enables individuals to access information about available transit services across the state,” notes David Ripplinger, the SURTC researcher who directed the project.



Feedback on a prototype website was used to make the website as complete and user friendly as possible. “Users are able to view basic information about transit agencies such as contact information, service area, hours of operation, reservation policies, ADA accessibility, schedules, fees and services provided,” Ripplinger says. “The website is an excellent resource to improve the mobility of users.” Development of the website was supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Federal Transit Administration.

“Will someone nice always answer?” Often a transit agency’s first opportunity to communicate with an individual from the public is through the telephone. Gary Hegland presented this telephone etiquette workshop to the Nebraska Association of Transportation Providers Managers Workshop in June. The focus of the session was to provide tips on improving telephone communication and to emphasize the importance of telephone courtesy in overall customer service. This conference was SURTC’s first opportunity to work with the Nebraska Transit Association and its 75 member agencies.



Fundraising and local match training. The Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) invited Gary Hegland and Carol Wright to its fall conference and expo in Sept. to give a presentation on fundraising and local match for transit agencies. Hegland and Wright emphasized that fundraising requires both the art of developing and nurturing relationships and the science of using data, research and tested fund-raising models. They discussed how transit agencies could enhance funding by working with federal programs, developing coordination and partnership programs, achieving long-term financial stability, using in-kind match opportunities, and developing special fund-raising events. This was the first training SURTC conducted for CASTA.

Human resource management. The Dakota Transit Association 2007 Conference, Vendor Show and Rodeo in Sept. 15-19 in Dickinson, ND, included a SURTC presentation on human resource management. The session, presented by Gary Hegland and Carol Wright, focused on recruiting and retaining quality transit employees. Wright and Hegland also covered a variety of other key management issues. Attendees received a human resources policy manual template on CD. The template allows each participant to insert their own specific information, creating a policy manual customized for their agency.

Risk management. Risk management is a hot topic for tightly budgeted transit agencies. Gary Hegland provides training which offers a “big picture” look at the issue. “Most agencies only think of liability and accident insurance, but there are other significant risks,” he says. In his training, Hegland covers risks to property, people, reputation and income. National studies show that one of the major causes of loss to non-profit organizations is fraud and embezzlement. “People don’t think about those potential losses when they are planning risk management strategies,” he notes. Hegland presented the training to the Alaska Community Transportation Transit Conference in September. He has been invited to present the training at three sites in Minnesota and in Texas in 2008. Several other states have also expressed interest.



Finding good partners. As non-profit and human service agencies look for ways to become more efficient through coordination, finding a good fit can be a challenge. “Too often, organizations look for a partner that can simply take over a problem situation,” notes Gary Hegland. “A better approach is to develop a coordinated effort that benefits each partner. In transit, that means finding a partner that not only has clients that need rides, but that can help pay for services.” In his presentation to the Alaska Community Transportation Transit Conference, Hegland outlined how to find partners and how to negotiate mutually beneficial agreements.”

How-to for board members. A board of directors can be a transit agency’s greatest asset or its worst liability. Clearly outlining the roles and responsibilities of board members can make all the difference, says Gary Hegland. In a training session for the Dakota Transit Association’s annual conference, Hegland highlighted 10 key responsibilities of effective board members and highlighted some common problems and issues that non-profit boards must overcome. Much of the content for the session was developed by the National Center for Non-Profit Boards based in Washington, D.C.

Transit vendor show basics. Over the past few years, the Dakota Transit Association has gradually built the vendor’s show at its annual convention into a money-maker for both the association and vendors while making it a valuable source of information and products for members. SURTC’s Gary Hegland who also serves as executive director of the DTA, presented information on planning and developing a successful transit show to the Utah Urban/Rural Specialized Transportation Association. He highlighted four key actions transit associations must take to develop successful vendor shows: they must develop relationships with vendors; they must encourage transit operators to make purchases from those vendors; they must build time into conferences for attendees to visit vendors; and they must treat vendors as part of their organization during conferences.

Transit safety and security. In 2007, Gary Hegland was certified by the Community Transportation Association of America as a transit safety reviewer who can conduct transit safety and security assessments. “Reviewers visit transit systems and determine if they meet industry benchmarks for safety and security. In those areas where they fall short of the benchmarks, we offer suggestions on how to improve,” Hegland explains. In November, he performed an assessment for Anchorage Public Transit and was able to offer some strategies for improving driver and vehicle safety.

SURTC helps with new insurance option. The Community Transportation Insurance Program (CTIP) is a proposed insurance company sponsored by Community Transportation Association of America and Pacific Shore Insurance Company for CTAA members needing an insurance option. The CTIP is being formed in response to needs and concerns expressed by members of

the association. SURTC's Gary Hegland is on an advisory board that is setting quality assurance guidelines for transit systems that want to join the pool insurance company. Those guidelines will determine what agencies can be covered, what coverage may be provided, and the cost of that coverage.

Pass training continues. Since SURTC began the Passenger Service and Safety Training (PASS) Driver Certification program in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah, nearly 375 drivers have been certified according to Gary Hegland. Hegland has been involved as a PASS instructor for more than 200 of those drivers. The training teaches drivers how to handle people with varying disabilities, including proper operation of wheelchair lifts and ensuring passengers have a safe and secure ride. Many transit agencies have reported greater customer satisfaction following completion of the training.



Continuing to weave the web. With information on training, outreach and education programs, SURTC's website, www.surtc.org, continues to grow. An events calendar features national transit-related events and the resources page includes census data maps, a searchable transportation glossary and links to SURTC research reports. Contact information for SURTC staff is available. Readers can also find newsletters and annual reports.

Dakota Transit Association. SURTC continues to nurture its relationship with the Dakota Transit Association (DTA). DTA serves transit agencies in North Dakota and South Dakota. The association's administrative home is with SURTC, and staff member Gary Hegland is DTA's executive director. The arrangement allows the association to access SURTC and Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute resources. At the same time, SURTC maintains close contact with transit agencies in the region, assuring that its programs are relevant to the needs of transit providers and users. For more information, see www.dakotatransit.org/.



Transit Lane newsletter. SURTC's Transit Lane newsletter is published twice each year to provide information to transit agencies and officials. The newsletters include updates on research, education, training, and outreach activities of the center as well as feature stories on notable accomplishments of transit agencies and personnel in the region. To review issues, go to www.surtc.org/newsletter/.



Research Reports

Cao, Xinyu, and Jill Hough. (2007). *Hedonic Value of Transit Accessibility: An Empirical Analysis in a Small Urban Area*. UGPTI Report 191, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Hegland, Gary, Jon Mielke, Del Peterson, Carol Wright, and Jill Hough. (2007). *Coordination Assessment and Transit Development Plan: River Cities Public Transit*. Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Hough, Jill. (2007). *Realized Travel Demand and Relative Desired Mobility of Elderly Women in Rural and Small Urban North Dakota*. UGPTI Report 192, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Mielke, Jon, Gary Hegland, James Miller, David Ripplinger, Carol Wright, Del Peterson, and Jill Hough. (2007). *Turtle Mountain and Rolette County Transit Development Plan*. UGPTI Report 176, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Peterson, Del. (2007). *Small Transit Vehicle Industry Study*. UGPTI Report 181, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Ripplinger, David. (2007). *Campus Transit Development Planning: A Case Study*. UGPTI Staff Paper 166, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Ripplinger, David. (2007). *Designing a School Transportation Management System with Public Transportation Capabilities*. UGPTI Staff Paper 165, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute, North Dakota State University, Fargo.

Wright, Carol. (2007). *Transit Glossary and Resource Directory* published by SURTC and available on-line at www.surtc.org/resources/transglossary.php

Journal Articles

Cao, X., Mokhtarian, P. L., and Handy, S. L. (2007). Cross-sectional and quasi-panel explorations of the connection between the built environment and auto ownership. *Environment and Planning A*, 39 (4), 830-847.

Cao, X., Mokhtarian, P. L., and Handy, S. L. (2007). Do changes in neighborhood characteristics lead to changes in travel behavior? A structural equations modeling approach. *Transportation*.

Handy, S. L., Cao, X., and Mokhtarian, P. L. (2007). The causal influence of neighborhood design on physical activity within the neighborhood: Evidence from Northern California. *American Journal of Health Promotion*.

Staff Presentations

Do Changes in Neighborhood Characteristics Lead to Changes in Travel Behavior? A Structural Equations Modeling Approach. presented by Xinyu Cao at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, in January.

Gender-Role Based Difference in Time Allocation: A Case Study of Shenzhen, China presented by Xinyu Cao at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, in January.

Examining the Impacts of Residential Self-Selection on Travel Behavior: Methodologies and Empirical Findings presented by Xinyu Cao at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, in January.

Realized Travel Demands of Elderly Women presented by Jill Hough at the 48th Transportation Research Forum, Boston, MA, in March.

Senior Mobility: Important Issues for an Aging Population presented by Carol Wright at the 48th Transportation Research Forum, Boston, MA, in March.

Residential and Travel Choices of Elderly Residents of Northern California presented by Xinyu Cao at the 48th Transportation Research Forum, Boston, MA, in March.

Smart Growth as a Strategy for Reducing Auto Dependence presented by Xinyu Cao in March at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, as part of MIT's Distinguished Speaker Series.

Introduction to Technology in Transit presented by David Ripplinger at the Dakota Transit Association's mid-year meeting, Oacoma, SD in March.

Advanced Small Vehicle Study presented by Del Peterson at the Spring 2007 Transportation Seminar Series at North Dakota State University sponsored by Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

The Impact of Computerized Vehicle Routing on Rural School Transportation Efficacy presented by David Ripplinger at the Spring 2007 Transportation Seminar Series at North Dakota State University sponsored by Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

Scientific Writing presented by Xinyu Cao at the Spring 2007 Transportation Seminar Series at North Dakota State University sponsored by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

Land Use as a Strategy to Reduce Auto Dependence presented by Xinyu Cao at the Spring 2007 Transportation Seminar Series at North Dakota State University sponsored by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

Common Pitfalls in Writing presented by Carol Wright at the at the Spring 2007 Transportation Seminar Series at North Dakota State University sponsored by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

Keys to Developing a Vendor Show presented by Gary Hegland to the URSTA Board of Directors of the Utah Urban Rural Specialized Transit Association Spring Conference in Moab, UT, in April.

Development of the Community Transportation Mutual Insurance Company presented by Gary Hegland at the Montana Transit Association Spring Conference, Great Falls, MT, in April.

Advanced Small Transit Vehicle Technology Study presented by Del Peterson at the American Public Transportation Association Bus and Paratransit Conference, Nashville, TN, in May.

Advanced Small Transit Vehicle Technology Study presented by Del Peterson at the Community Transportation Association of America Expo, Reno, NV, in May.

Quality Assurance Approach presented by Gary Hegland at the Community Transportation Association of America Expo, Reno, NV, in May.

Will Someone Nice Always Answer? presented by Gary Hegland at the Nebraska Association of Transit Providers, Grand Island, NE, in June.

Creative Fundraising and Local Match presented by Carol Wright and Gary Hegland at the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies Fall Conference, Breckenridge, CO, in September.

Finding Coordination Partners, panel discussion which included Gary Hegland at the Alaska State Transit Conference, Fairbanks, AK, in September.

Overcoming Barriers to Coordination, panel discussion which included Gary Hegland at the Alaska State Transit Conference, Fairbanks, AK, in September.

Risk Management for Transit Agencies, panel discussion which included Gary Hegland at the Alaska State Transit Conference, Fairbanks, AK, in September.

Marketing and Creative Match Sources, panel discussion which included Gary Hegland at the Alaska State Transit Conference, Fairbanks, AK, in September.

Managing People Effectively: Solving Human Resource Management Problems presented by Carol Wright and Gary Hegland at the Dakota Transit Association Fall Conference, Dickinson, ND, in September.

Roles and Responsibilities of Transit Board Members presented by Gary Hegland at the Dakota Transit Association Fall Conference, Dickinson, ND, in September.

Definition of Small Urban and Rural presented by David Ripplinger as part of the Fall Transportation Seminar Series at North Dakota State University sponsored by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

Travel Behavior of Elderly Women in North Dakota: An Ecological Model presented by Jill Hough as part of the Fall Transportation Seminar Series at North Dakota State University sponsored by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

Common Pitfalls of Writing presented by Carol Wright as part of the Fall Transportation Seminar Series at North Dakota State University sponsored by the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

Introduction to SURTC presented by Jill Hough for the 11th Annual State Safety Oversight Program Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration in September.

Real-Time Response to Hazard and Security Incidents, panel moderated by Gary Hegland at the 17th National Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Conference, Stevenson, WA, in Oct. 2006.

Professional Involvement

To provide perspective and input on rural and small urban mobility issues and to gain background on challenges facing stakeholders, SURTC staff participate in the following activities:

- National Transit Institute (NTI) Advisory Board, Rutgers University
- Transit Cooperative Research Program Oversight Project Selection (TOPS) Committee, Sponsored by the National Academies of Science
- Transportation Research Board (TRB) 2008 Rural and Intercity Bus Conference Planning Committee
- Transportation Research Forum (TRF) 2008 Annual Meeting Planning Committee
- ND Statewide Human Service Steering Committee
- National Bus Safety and Security Program Working Group for FTA
- AARP National Planning Conference “The Role of Transportation Planning in Creating Livable Communities”
- CTAA State Delegate for ND
- National Quality Assurance Committee on Community Transportation Mutual Insurance
- Steering Committee for Generating Public Involvement in Transportation Policy and Funding Decision Making Processes
- Transportation Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Panels
 - J-7 Committee, Selection of APTA Research Projects
 - F-12 “Employee Compensation Guidelines for Transit Providers in Rural and Small Urban Areas”
 - SF-12 “Paratransit Managers’ Skills, Qualifications, and Needs”
 - B-32 “Understanding How to Motivate Communities to Support and Ride Public Transit”
 - F-13 “Driver Recruitment, Retention and Performance in ADA Paratransit Operations”
 - B-35 “A Handbook for Planning and Operating Flexible Public Transportation Services”

SMALL URBAN & RURAL TRANSIT CENTER
Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute • North Dakota State University