



# SURTC Annual Report 2006

**SMALL URBAN & RURAL TRANSIT CENTER**

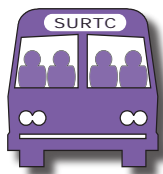
---

Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute • North Dakota State University

# CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| from the Director .....                                | 1  |
| Transit Leaders Help SURTC Develop Strategic Plan..... | 2  |
| SURTC News .....                                       | 4  |
| Research .....   | 7  |
| Education.....   | 10 |
| Training and Outreach .....                            | 11 |
| Staff Presentations .....                              | 13 |
| Staff .....  | 15 |
| Advisory Board .....                                   | 16 |

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center  
Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute  
North Dakota State University  
430 IACC Building • PO Box 5074  
Fargo, ND 58105  
P: 701.231.7766  
F: 701.231.1945  
[www.surtc.org](http://www.surtc.org)



# ON BOARD WITH SURTC

*from the Director . . .*



Honest self-study is a difficult process. Having passed our fourth anniversary in 2006 with significant growth in both funding and programming, it seemed appropriate to look at where the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center has been and where it's headed. With that in mind, we asked regional and national leaders in transit to help us do just that.

We asked them to be honest in both their criticisms and their praise.

Their learned opinions and astute observations helped us develop a strategic plan that will guide our future development and help us focus on projects and activities to serve our primary clients and mission. The advisers challenged us to continue to search for the perfect balance of applied and academic research. They pointed out new areas that could be addressed by our training and outreach efforts. They urged us to develop innovative academic programs that address the needs of traditional and non-traditional students alike. What you read in future annual reports will be guided by the vision developed with the help of this group.

As you read this report, you will see the impact we're already having in our region. We've assisted the transit agencies on the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation develop a plan to offer more service more efficiently. We've developed a business plan for River Cities Transit in Pierre, SD, to guide its operations. In Fargo-Moorhead, we've helped Metropolitan Area Transit evaluate how it's going to continue to comply with ADA requirements in a growing metro area. We've helped the North Dakota Department of Commerce evaluate the possibility of establishing commuter van pools across the state.

What is particularly exciting about our work, is that it's being noticed across the country. Review the list of presentations at the end of this report and you'll see that SURTC's talented staff members have been asked to share their efforts with a variety of groups across the country. The work we're doing will have implications in rural and small urban areas from coast to coast.

Mobility is a tremendous challenge for those in rural and small urban areas. Demographics, budgets, and geography often conspire in those areas to keep people from getting where they need to be. With a renewed vision and significant momentum, we're confident we can help address this challenge.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill Hough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Jill Hough, Director

# TRANSIT LEADERS HELP SURTC DEVELOP STRATEGIC PLAN

A rigorous full-day planning session that included staff members as well as regional and national leaders in the transit industry has yielded SURTC's first strategic plan.

"The planning process allowed us to tap the expertise of a broad cross section of talented people," notes SURTC Director Jill Hough. "The resulting plan will provide direction for our research, education, and training and outreach efforts. As our program grows, the strategic plan will be valuable in keeping us focused on our primary clients and mission."

In addition to SURTC staff, participants in the process included:

- Al Abeson, director of Easter Seals Project ACTION
- J. Barry Barker, executive director of the Transit Authority of River City, Louisville, KY
- Ron Baumgart, executive director of River Cities Transit, Pierre, SD
- Bob Bright, executive director of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments
- Bruce Fuchs, public transit program manager with NDDOT
- Gene Griffin, director, Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute
- Lyn Hellegaard, coordinator of the Montana Transit Association
- David Lee, general manager of Connecticut Transit
- Dave Leftwich, local government division engineer with NDDOT
- Bill Millar, president of the American Public Transportation Association
- Jim Moench, executive director of the ND Disabilities Advocacy Consortium
- Bruce Robinson, Office of Research, Demonstration and Innovation, Federal Transit Administration
- Robert Skinner, executive director of the Transportation Research Board
- Pam Ternes, director of the Standing Rock Public Transportation, Fort Yates, ND
- Chris Zeilinger, assistant director for governmental affairs and training for the Community Transportation Association of America



Participants separated into groups to focus on research, training and outreach, and education. Within those groups, participants identified key program areas, approaches and priorities. At the end of the session, each group presented a summary, and all those in attendance selected top priorities in each area.

In presenting a summary of the research group's discussion, Bill Millar commented, "The foundation of SURTC is state and local relationships. You need to build on those to develop multi-state relationships. Don't be afraid to say that you are going to be the national center for small urban and rural public transportation issues. Don't be shy about that."

## Research

Participants in the research group urged SURTC to maintain a balance of applied and academic research with a focus on obtaining measurable results. Research should reflect the center's emphasis on rural and small urban transit. They emphasized that efforts should be made to apply local problem-solving efforts nationally. Research opportunities included improving public transit awareness in small urban and rural communities; transit applications within sprawling small urban areas; and the influence of energy costs on transit.

## Training and Outreach

Participants in the training and outreach group drew information from a recent SURTC training survey conducted in North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming, Utah and Minnesota to identify key training needs. Top driver training needs were defensive driving, Passenger Service and Safety (PASS), first aid, and handling difficult passengers. For managers, top needs were Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements, ADA rights and responsibilities of providers, ADA rights and responsibilities of customers, and customer service. The group suggested that SURTC continue to build on its training programs and expand its image by increasing outreach efforts to additional state transit associations and through participation in national conferences. Proposed training priorities would be an "Introduction to Transit Management" course, a train-the-trainers travel training program, and workshops on ADA, coordination, and emotional intelligence.

## Education

The education group indicated that programs could be differentiated from training and outreach by defining education programs as those offered for credit and enrolling students to work toward a degree or certificate granted by an institution of higher learning. They noted that programs should be focused to build competencies for those in different stages of their careers, for example those at the start of their careers in transit management vs. those at the mid-career level. Participants also noted the need for a transit textbook that would draw on expertise from across the industry and serve as a text for students in formal courses, and as a resource for those already in the field.

## Advisory Board Endorses Strategic Plan

SURTC's advisory board endorsed results of the strategic planning process at its annual meeting in September.

"The meeting was an opportunity for our advisory board members to walk through the proposed strategic plan and provide input and reaction to the plan," Hough noted. "We look to these individuals for direction in our research, training and outreach, and education programs; so it's essential that they provide input into our planning process and concur with the end result."

Board members encouraged SURTC staff members to further prioritize areas of effort identified under the strategic plan headings of *research*, *education*, and *training and outreach*. Additionally, the board members noted their agreement with plans to build on relationships with transit related groups, noting that state departments of transportation and state transit organizations were particularly important.

In general, the group praised the plan and endorsed its implementation. “That’s a significant step in this process,” Hough said. “The endorsement of the board signals that we’re focusing on the right issues and tasks.”

## SURTC NEWS

### New Staff

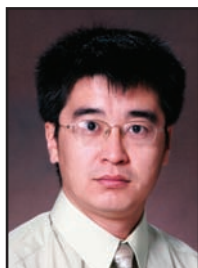


**Carol Wright** joined SURTC in June as associate director for training and outreach.

For nearly 12 years, Wright had been the executive director of James River Transit and Wells/Sheridan Transit in Jamestown, ND. She was responsible for all aspects of public transportation including urban transit, rural transit, specialized transit, Dial-A-Ride and contracted services in the three-county area surrounding Jamestown.

She is currently the North Dakota representative for the Community Transportation Association of America and past president of the Dakota Transit Association. In 2005, she was certified by the Community Transportation Association of America as a Community Transit Manager and as a Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) Trainer.

Wright received her B.S. in speech/English/education at North Dakota State University in 1975, and went on to complete her M.S. in human development and education/gerontology in 1994, also at NDSU.



**Xinyu (Jason) Cao** joined SURTC in July as an associate research fellow.

Cao received his B.S. in civil engineering in 1998 and his M.S. in civil engineering in 2001 from Tsinghua University in Beijing, China. In 2005, he received his M.S. in statistics from the University of California-Davis. He recently completed his Ph.D. in civil engineering with an emphasis on transportation planning at the University of California-Davis. In addition, he received a University of California Transportation Center Dissertation Fellowship and the Wootan Award for Outstanding Dissertation in Transportation Planning/Policy.

At SURTC, Cao is researching transit-oriented development and solutions in small urban and rural transit. In the past, he completed research on land use and transportation planning, alternative fuel vehicles and information communication technology. Some of Cao’s current research projects include mobility for the disadvantaged in North Dakota, the time-space structure of Chinese urban residents, and residential choice of residents in small urban areas.



**Kathryn Harrington-Hughes** is an associate research fellow with UGPTI, devoting part of her time to SURTC efforts focusing on marketing and communication.

She has more than 20 years of experience working for non-profit and for-profit organizations in the transportation sector. Before joining UGPTI and SURTC, she served as vice president of the Eno Transportation Foundation in Washington, DC, where her responsibilities included planning and conducting the Transit Cooperative Research Program's International Transit Studies Program, as well as developing policy forums and leadership programs.

### **Wright serves on human services transit committee**

Carol Wright, SURTC's associate director of training and outreach, is serving on a steering committee to develop a Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for North Dakota.

The North Dakota Department of Transportation assembled the committee which includes representatives from NDDOT, the ND Department of Human Services – Aging Services Division, the ND Department of Commerce, Community Action, the Bismarck Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the City of Fargo Metropolitan Area Transportation, Bis-Man Transit, the Fargo Senior Commission, and the Grand Forks MPO. The committee is chaired by Wade Kline of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments.

In August 2005, Congress reauthorized the Surface Transportation Act. As part of this reauthorization, federally funded projects such as the New Freedom Initiative, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program (Section 5310) must be part of a "locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan." This plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation services, human services providers and the general public.

The North Dakota committee had its first meeting in Bismarck in September and a telephone conference in mid-November. The committee is responsible for addressing application criteria and the process by which New Freedom and JARC projects will be funded.

### **Hough appointed to Transit Cooperative Research Program project panel**

Jill Hough, director of the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, was recently appointed to the Transit Cooperative Research Program project panel (J-11) on American Public Transportation Association-Related Research by the National Research Council and the Transportation Research Board executive committee.

Hough will bring an academic perspective to the panel and provide technical guidance and counsel for transit-related research projects and input on potential projects and research methods. The panel provides direction for public transportation at the national level.

Hough has more than 15 years experience in transportation research. She currently serves on the TCRP Oversight and Project Selection (TOPS) Committee, on the TCRP panel on Rural/Small Urban Transit Agency Salary Structures, Policies and Procedures (F-12), and on the TCRP Synthesis of Transit Practices Program, participating in a Synthesis of Paratransit Managers' Skills, Qualifications and Needs (SF-12). She is also a member of the National Transit Institute Board of Directors.

## FTA administrator visits SURTC

Federal Transit Administration Region 8 Administrator Lee Waddleton visited SURTC in September as part of a tour of transit-related facilities and activities in North Dakota. Waddleton was in North Dakota to meet with Bruce Fuchs of the NDDOT. Fuchs arranged the tour. In Fargo, Waddleton visited Metro Area Transit facilities and spent time meeting with SURTC staff to learn more about its programs. He has been Region 8 administrator since 2000. Region 8 headquarters is in Denver, CO, and includes the states of Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. It was recently announced that Waddleton will be retiring soon from the FTA. Letitia Thompson will be acting administrator. She is currently administrator in Region 2.

## Two advisory board members named



**Pam Ternes** is director of Standing Rock Public Transportation in Fort Yates, ND. Ternes is an enrolled member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and has served in her current position since 1998. She coordinated the expansion of the transportation program from two one-way routes to the current program which operates eight fixed routes and a demand-response service covering 15 communities located within four counties and the two states of North Dakota and South Dakota. The program is funded by Sitting Bull College and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

**Audrey Allums** is the Transit Section supervisor for the Montana Department of Transportation. Originally from Flandreau, SD, she is a graduate of Chadron State College in Chadron, NE. She is currently completing her master's degree in transportation policy, operations and logistics at the George Mason University School of Public Policy. Allums has spent the last 16 years as an employee of the state of Montana, with 13 years working for the Department of Justice. For six years she was the state Juvenile Justice Specialist. She spent two years with the state Highway Traffic Safety Office and recently moved to Transit Section supervisor. The Transit Section administers federal and state transit programs, providing technical and financial assistance to local agencies, governments and companies that provide local and intercity passenger service.





# RESEARCH

SURTC research focuses on issues and challenges faced by transit users and providers in small urban and rural communities. 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.

**Building a better bus.** SURTC is working with the Federal Transit Administration to bring together bus manufacturers, bus equipment manufacturers, transit providers, 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 is aimed at identifying incentives to adopt new technologies and the impact that standardization of bus specifications would have on production efficiency and cost. The FTA has asked SURTC to gather input on a prototype for a bus designed specifically for small transit agencies. “A transit vehicle designed to meet the specific needs of smaller systems will lead to increased efficiencies for transit providers while offering riders more comfort with improved ride quality and greater vehicle maneuverability for operators,” explains SURTC researcher Del Peterson. The project is being funded by both the FTA and SURTC. The results will be presented to manufacturing companies and may result in the development of a prototype bus.

**Reservation transit development plan.** SURTC researchers helped Rolette County and the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation develop a three-phase plan for improving transit services in the area. The Turtle Mountain Reservation, in extreme north central North Dakota, is relatively densely populated. Unemployment in the area is high, and income levels are low. Poverty, health issues and educational needs of residents make improved transit a priority. SURTC research fellows, Jon Mielke, Gary Hegland, James Miller, David Ripplinger, Carol Wright, Del Peterson, and Jill Hough joined forces with the North Dakota Department of Transportation and tribal officials to develop and coordinate a transit plan that addresses those issues. Mielke and Hegland met with the transit providers and other agencies to evaluate current services and to look for duplication and gaps. An advisory committee was formed to provide input into the plan. “With this new development plan in place, the ongoing efforts of the area’s transit providers and the proposed advisory board will facilitate the development and operation of a fully coordinated transit system that responds to the mobility needs of area residents in an efficient and cost-effective manner,” Hegland says.

**Evaluating the small bus supply chain.** Researcher Del Peterson reviewed the structure and recent history of the bus manufacturing industry and major suppliers of small buses. The study documented the financial condition of the industry, analyzed the patterns of bus purchases, and identified ways that state and federal policies and procedures and transit agency practices could be modified to increase the industry’s viability.

**Student attitudes and use of transit.** Researcher David Ripplinger surveyed first-year NDSU students on their attitudes toward transit and their use of campus and municipal transit services. The same group of students will be surveyed each of the next three years to monitor any changes in attitudes or behavior regarding transit. “The survey will allow us to be much more confident in determining why students do or don’t use transit,” Ripplinger says. In addition, the information will be useful as NDSU and other campuses look at enhancing and marketing transit services.

**Projecting changes in mobility-challenged populations.** Researchers are developing projections for various mobility-challenged population groups from 2005 to 2025 in each of North Dakota’s 53 counties. The effort will serve as a guide for future public transportation research and policy development. The populations of interest in the study were seniors, the disabled, students age 5 to 19, and households without vehicles. Each of those populations traditionally faces greater mobility challenges than other members of their community.

**Enhancing school transportation management.** SURTC fine-tuned its bus routing software with help from the Enderlin, ND, school district where the software was tested. Although similar software is used in many large school districts, SURTC’s software is designed for smaller districts like the 120-student Enderlin district. Graduate research assistant Yan Wang assisted in developing the easy-to-use, low-cost software specifically designed to help rural and small-urban school districts create bus routes that make the best use of buses and fuel while minimizing the amount of time students must spend on the bus. Researcher David Ripplinger presented routes to the school board in April. The board asked him to help develop additional routes for students who attend school in Sheldon, a school district that will be consolidating with Enderlin next year. Based on the experience in Enderlin, the software was revised, and a research paper was developed outlining how the program will impact transportation in school districts throughout North Dakota.

**What do “small urban” and “rural” really mean?** When it comes to using those terms in discussions about public policy and research related to transit, perceptions are important. Researchers found that those terms meant vastly different things to the various people involved in transit across the nation. Researcher David Ripplinger examined USDA, Census and FTA data to find definitions. “What we found was helpful, but inadequate,” he says. He 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.

**Assessing MAT rider satisfaction.** The City of Fargo wanted to know if riders were satisfied with the Metro Area Transit’s current bus service, so the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments asked SURTC to find out. SURTC conducted an on-board survey with the help of 12 college students who rode buses on the ten Fargo routes. The students administered surveys to 800 passengers during a three-day period. Survey questions covered the frequency of riding, ease of riding, cleanliness of buses, quality and other issues. The city is using the results to address areas of concern and in developing a five-year transit plan.



**State management plan nears completion.** SURTC is working with NDDOT to complete a North Dakota State Transit Management Plan. The plan will reflect state and federal requirements for transit agencies and for the use of public funds designated for transit. According to the project’s coordinator, Dustin Ulmer, “The plan will be condensed considerably from the previous plan, making it easier for agencies to read and apply to their operations.” The new plan will include changes introduced in the new federal transportation bill. As part of the development process, Ulmer and DOT officials reviewed plans from other states to consider approaches that could be incorporated into a workable plan for North Dakota. The plan will be a guide for funding application processes and timelines, minimum requirements, selection criteria, and reporting and monitoring requirements.

**Travel potential of rural elderly.** As the population across rural regions of the United States consolidates around trade centers, the proportion of elderly remaining in small towns and rural areas continues to grow. That situation is bound to have an influence on their mobility, and a SURTC study should help researchers and policy makers assess the situation. The number of Americans older than 65 will more than double by 2030 and 9 million of them will be older than 85 years old. SURTC Director Jill Hough is conducting the research as part of her work toward a doctoral degree from the University of California-Davis. The research will identify factors that influence the travel potential for individuals living in rural areas, social factors that influence travel potential for those individuals and, environmental factors that most impact their travel potential.



“We ultimately want to make recommendations for improving the travel potential of the rural elderly. Those recommendations could focus on transit services, other services or land-use policies,” Hough says.

**SDSU campus transit study.** SURTC is helping the Brookings Area Transit Authority and South Dakota State University to develop a plan to better meet the mobility needs of area residents and university students and staff. SURTC was chosen for the project based on its history of working on campus mobility areas in the Fargo-Moorhead area, according to David Ripplinger, coordinator of the study. SURTC conducted a survey on transit use in the community and held shareholder meetings to assess transit needs and ideas. The final plan will identify mobility needs, identify potential service opportunities to meet those needs, recommend the best service alternatives and identify an implementation plan.

# EDUCATION

Managing public transit is an evolving, complex challenge that changes frequently with regulatory updates, new technology, competition, and changing demands and demographics. 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



**APTA scholarship for Ulmer.** A scholarship from the American Public Transportation Foundation was recently renewed for SURTC graduate research assistant Dustin Ulmer. The original award was for \$5,000. The renewal is for \$3,000. The scholarship is directed to an outstanding student who intends to pursue a career in the transit industry. Ulmer attended a scholarship award presentation ceremony during the American Public Transportation Association Annual Meeting and Expo Oct. 8-11 in San Jose, CA.

**Regional RTAP Library.** SURTC continues to be the home of a regional library of transit-related training materials for North Dakota, Montana and South Dakota.

In the past, each individual state supported its own library, often within the state's department of transportation or within a state transit organization. The libraries are affiliated with the FTA's Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP). Gary Hegland is coordinating the effort for SURTC. Library materials have been consolidated at NDSU and an online inventory and check-out system has been established. Initial contributions from each state have been used to purchase up-to-date materials.



**Seminar: driving by choice or necessity.** Americans drive more each year, with the average American household logging more than 31,000 miles in 2001. Often, drivers insist that owning a car and driving is a necessity, but some researchers are exploring whether driving is done by choice or necessity. Susan Handy, professor of environmental science and policy at the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California-Davis addressed the topic at a September seminar sponsored by SURTC at NDSU. Nearly 30 students and staff members attended. In their research, Handy and her colleagues found that drivers engage in "excess driving" by taking extra trips, choosing longer routes, picking more distant destinations and choosing the car

over other travel modes. She noted transportation planning has traditionally focused on making it easier to drive. Some urban areas are taking an alternative approach: making it easier to drive less.

# TRAINING AND OUTREACH

SURTC works with transit agencies and organizations to address specific issues and opportunities. This focused effort results in new training programs and the identification of topics for additional research. Outreach efforts put SURTC staff in direct contact with transit managers, operators, and employees. As a result, SURTC brings real-world perspective to its work.

## **SURTC Training Sessions Included:**

**Human resource management.** SURTC staff members Carol Wright and Gary Hegland presented a course in human resource management at the Utah Urban/Rural Specialized Transportation Association Annual Conference in Salt Lake City in September. The seminar provided tools to assist new and experienced transit supervisors, managers, and directors select and manage employees. It was designed to walk employers through the hiring process and the development of an effective employee handbook. At the conclusion of the session, each participant received an employee handbook template that they can customize for their own agency. A similar course was taught in May 2006 by Wright and Lyn Hellegaard, director of the Missoula Ravalli Transportation Management Association. That course was directed at transit managers and human resource directors and was offered over the Transportation Learning Network, an interactive video-conferencing network that is part of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute.

**PASS training.** Since SURTC began the Passenger Service and Safety Training (PASS) Driver Certification program in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah, more than 200 drivers have been certified, and 16 people are now certified to teach the training, according to Gary Hegland. Hegland and Carol Wright, SURTC staff, are both certified PASS trainers. The training teaches drivers to deal with people with varying disabilities, including how to load them onto wheelchair lifts and to ensure they have a safe and secure ride. Many transit agencies have reported greater customer satisfaction following the completion of the training. Ron Baumgart, director of River Cities Transit in Pierre, SD, said his office has received double the amount of complimentary phone calls from passengers the office normally receives. PASS trainings have been conducted by SURTC staff in South Dakota at Brookings, Pierre and Aberdeen; in North Dakota at Valley City, Jamestown and Dickinson; and in St. George, UT.

**School transportation efficiency training.** In cooperation with the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, SURTC researcher David Ripplinger conducted a school transportation efficiency training program across the state in 2005 and 2006. In total, the training consisted of nine modules. Topics included coordinated maintenance, routing, technology, finance, safety, and security. The 2005 North Dakota Legislature provided funding for the program through the Department of Public Instruction. Ripplinger says many rural districts are facing declining tax bases and declining enrollments. This forces them to look for ways to be more economical and efficient in transporting students. "The training exposed superintendents to concepts and fundamentals that will help them do a better job with their transportation programs," he says.

**Fundraising and local match.** Raising money for transit operations is always a challenge. SURTC offered a seminar focusing on numerous ways of generating operating capital. The seminar was held Oct. 18 in Bismarck, ND, and Nov. 9 at the Utah Transit Authority Training Center in Salt Lake City. “This seminar focused on investigating an organization’s situation and brainstorming funding options based on the skills, abilities and knowledge of the staff,” noted SURTC staff member Gary Hegland. Hegland conducted the seminar along with Ron Baumgart, executive director of River Cities Public Transit in Pierre, SD. The seminar was intended for transit managers, board members and transit bookkeepers.

**Transit planning at tribal transportation conference.** The ninth annual National Tribal Transportation Conference featured transit planning sessions for the first time thanks to help from SURTC. Conference organizers were interested in transit sessions because of transit funding available through the new federal transportation bill. SURTC organized three sessions. The first focused on transit basics and featured representatives from the Community Transit Association of America. SURTC instructor Jim Miller presented a half-day session on developing business plans, and SURTC specialist Jon Mielke presented a half-day session on creating a transit development plan.

**Business planning at CTAA Expo.** Transit experts attending the Community Transportation Association of America’s Expo in June were able to learn how to develop a business plan. The one-day session was taught by SURTC affiliate faculty member Jim Miller. The course was designed to teach transit managers what a business plan is and how to develop one for their agency.

### **Outreach Efforts Included:**

**Web presence.** SURTC’s website continues to grow and now includes information on its research, education, and training and outreach programs. An events calendar featuring national transit-related events and a discussion board for transit-related topics are included. A “Publications and Maps” page links to SURTC’s research reports, newsletters, and annual reports as well as Census data maps for North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Minnesota and Wyoming.

**Newsletter.** News from SURTC and from transit agencies throughout the region are featured in the newsletter, Transit Lane, which is published twice each year. The newsletters provide updates on research, information on upcoming training and highlights of staff activities.

**Annual report.** SURTC’s first annual report, published in 2006, detailed work under way and completed through 2005. This annual report is the second. “The report has been a valuable tool in demonstrating our accomplishments and capabilities to potential partners at the local, regional and national level,” notes SURTC Director Jill Hough.

**Dakota Transit Association.** The Dakota Transit Association (DTA) serves transit agencies in North Dakota and South Dakota. The association’s administrative home is with SURTC. SURTC staff member Gary Hegland is DTA’s executive director. The arrangement allows the association to tap SURTC and NDSU resources in serving its members. At the same time, the arrangement allows SURTC to have close contact with transit agencies assuring that its programs are relevant to the needs of transit providers and users.

**Business plan development.** SURTC staff member Jim Miller worked with River Cities Transit in Pierre, SD, to help that agency develop a comprehensive transit plan. Part of the process was an evaluation of all services and management including maintenance, scheduling, and finance. The plan identified five possible options for service expansion and developed projections for ridership, cost and revenue. “We helped them set priorities and make projections for three to five years out,” Miller said.

## STAFF PRESENTATIONS

*Estimating the Impacts of Changes in ADA Complementary Paratransit Service Policy in a Small Urban Community* presented by David Ripplinger at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, in January.

*Framing the Transit University Community of the Future* presented by David Ripplinger at the American Public Transportation Association Transportation and University Communities Conference, East Lansing, MI, in March.

*ITS Transit Case Studies: Making a Case for Coordination of Community Transportation Services Using ITS* presented by David Ripplinger at the Transportation Research Forum Annual Meeting, New York, NY, in March.

*Bismarck State College Transportation and Supply Chain Management Program* presented by Jon Mielke at the Northern Plains Commerce Centre Shippers Conference, Bismarck, ND, in March.

*Feasibility of Commuter Bus Service between Wahpeton-Breckenridge and Fargo-Moorhead* presented by Del Peterson at the Transportation Research Forum Annual Meeting, New York, NY, in March.

*Advanced Small Transit Vehicle Scoping Paper Review* presented by Del Peterson at the American Public Transportation Association Bus and Paratransit Conference, Anaheim, CA, in May.

*Transportation and Disabilities* presented by Jill Hough at the North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Coalition meeting, Fargo, ND, in May.

*Transportation Legislation: National and North Dakota* presented by Jon Mielke at the North Dakota Disabilities Advocacy Coalition meeting in Bismarck, ND, in August.

*Reflecting on Risk Pools: A Proven Alternative to Combat the Rising Tide of Liability Insurance Costs* presented by Gary Hegland at the Community Transportation Association of America Annual Convention and EXPO, Orlando, FL, in June.

*Projecting Changes in Mobility Challenged Populations in North Dakota: 2005-2025* presented by David Ripplinger via the Transportation Learning Network interactive video conferencing network in June.

*Advanced Small Transit Vehicle Scoping Paper Review* presented by Del Peterson at the Community Transportation Association of America Annual Convention and EXPO, Orlando, FL, in June.

*Real-Time Response to Hazard and Security Incidents*, Gary Hegland served as moderator at the 17th National Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation Conference, Stevenson, WA, in November.

*How to Develop a Business Plan for Your Transit System*, presented by Jim Miller at the Ninth Annual National Tribal Transportation Conference, Cabazon, CA, in November.

*Putting Together a Transit Development Plan* presented by Jon Mielke at the Ninth Annual National Tribal Transportation Conference, Cabazon, CA, in November.

## **Faculty Outreach**

Jill Hough served as a faculty member for Easter Seals Project ACTION Mobility Planning Services Institute, Washington, DC, in April.

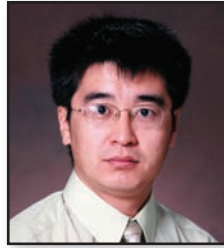
Jill Hough served on the faculty of the Community Transportation Association of America's Institute for Transportation Coordination, Washington, DC, in August.



# STAFF



Jill Hough  
Director



Xinyu (Jason) Cao  
Associate Research Fellow



Gary Hegland  
Training Coordinator



Jon Mielke  
Associate Research Fellow



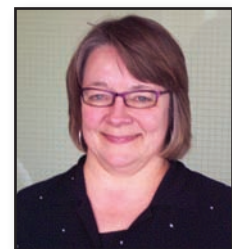
Jim Miller  
Faculty Affiliate



Del Peterson  
Associate Research Fellow



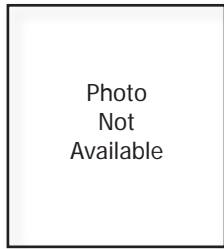
David Ripplinger  
Associate Research Fellow



Cindy Urness  
Faculty Affiliate



Carol Wright  
Associate Director  
Training and Outreach



Susan Hendrickson  
Administrative  
Assistant



Patrick Nichols  
Web Communications  
Manager



Natalie Beck  
Undergraduate  
Research Assistant



Nic Aakre  
Graduate Research  
Assistant



Dustin Ulmer  
Graduate Research  
Assistant



Yan Wang  
Graduate Research  
Assistant

# ADVISORY BOARD



Alan Abeson  
Executive Director  
Easter Seals Project ACTION



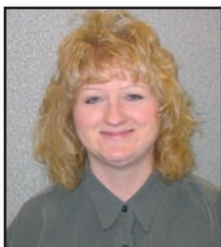
Audrey Allums  
Transit Section Supervisor  
Montana DOT



Keven Anderson  
District 4 Project Manager  
Minnesota DOT



Ron Baumgart  
Dakota Transit Association  
and General Manager  
River Cities Public Transit



Julia Bommelman  
Transit Administrator  
Metropolitan Area Transit (MAT)  
City of Fargo



Pam Boswell  
VP of Program Management  
and Educational Services  
American Public Transportation  
Association



Art Bowen  
Vice President  
Utah Urban Specialized  
Transportation Association



Rich Douglas  
Program Manager  
Wyoming DOT



Bruce Fuchs  
Program Manager  
North Dakota DOT



Lyn Hellegaard  
Coordinator  
Montana Transit Association



Bruce Lindholm  
Program Manager  
South Dakota DOT



Dale Marsico  
Executive Director  
Community Transportation  
Association of America



Ryan Marshall  
President  
Utah Urban Rural Specialized  
Transportation Association



Barbara Sisson  
Associate Administrator of Research,  
Demonstration and Innovation  
Federal Transit Administration



Sean Solan  
President  
Wyoming Public Transit Assn.  
and General Manager  
Wind River Transportation Authority



Pam Ternes  
Director  
Standing Rock Public  
Transportation



Lori Van Beek  
Transit Manager  
Metropolitan Area Transit (MAT)  
City of Moorhead