Florida’s Future is Riding on Public Transportation

The Florida Public Transportation Association is an organization that has a successful history. It has a proven track record of demonstrating all that is best about the transit industry. Obviously we would not be in this position without the wonderful work that has been accomplished in the past by previous holders of this post who have worked so hard for us all: and Tim Garling is no exception. Thank you, Tim!

As a member of the FPTA, I care about the benefits we provide to all transit systems in the State. There are many demands on those in our industry. The work of transit changes rapidly and makes new demands on us continually. This industry needs the support we offer to all our members – and the FPTA has historically been there to respond to legislative issues and to share innovative ideas with each other.

The theme set by the Chairman of the APTA at the Annual meeting in Chicago is – America’s Future is Riding on Public Transportation and so is fitting to parallel that theme. I have chosen a theme for my year as Chairperson of FPTA, it is:

Florida’s Future is Riding on Public Transportation

This theme has many connotations, as public transit:

• Improves the daily lives of the working families
• Puts people back to work
• Cleans up the air

(continued on page 3)
Congratulations to Norman R. Whitaker!

Norman R Whitaker has recently been appointed the Director of Transit in Key West, Florida. He replaces Myra Wittenberg and has over thirty years of transit background and expertise in both the public and private sectors. Mr. Whitaker starting out as a driver and has worked his way up through the transit ranks to his current position.

Prior to his appointment, he was the President of NRW Transportation Consulting Company, LLC and also the General Manager of Ride Right, LLC (Sumter County, Florida). Mr. Whitaker also served as the Manager of Operations, Safety/Security, Training and Interim Director of the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD, d.b.a. The Citrus Connection).

Congratulations to Norman Whitaker on your new role!
Member Spotlight...

Indian River Transit GoLine

Lisa Bacot travelled to Vero Beach in August to meet with Karen Deigl, Executive Director of the Senior Resource Association, Inc. and GoLine/Indian River Transit. GoLine is the county’s fixed route system, and the Senior Resource Association is also the designated Community Transportation Coordinator. They are a growing organization, which is reflected by the recently built transit facility that has opened, along with the hiring of several new positions, such as:

• Vice President, Transportation Operations Director
• Safety and Training Officer

The Safety and Training Officer has hit the ground running and has initiated a new two (2) week training program for new hires. GoLine staff is also in the process of standardizing all policies and procedures to ensure consistency in the way they operate. They are reviewing all paratransit eligibility files and improving the process for new riders. Another recent change has been that they have brought preventive maintenance in house; this has been a cost savings to the organization. This will also help to lower their operating expense per passenger mile even more, even though they are currently the second lowest in the State!

One of the biggest challenges for both the fixed route system and the paratransit service is retaining and recruiting drivers. There is not a large volume of potential personnel in this area to recruit from and the compensation is somewhat low for drivers. Another challenge for their system is obtaining local match dollars.

GoLine is in the process of building a Transit Hub, they are in the RFP stage of the process and are hoping the hub will be completed by December 2014. They currently have an inventory of 32 fixed route buses and 29 paratransit vehicles. With their no fare system, they are averaging over one (1) million trips per year on GoLine. The total transportation budget is approximately $3.5 million.

Lisa was also able to visit the staff at the Indian River Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The team members at the Indian River MPO are very supportive of GoLine and assist with developing and adopting plans to set priorities for the programming of improvements to the County’s transportation system.

It was great to see a growing system and staff that are truly dedicated to making the transportation program more efficient and more accountable to the rider’s needs! Thank you to Karen and her team for a great visit to GoLine in Vero Beach!

From the Chair (cont. from page 1)

• Decongests our highways
• Allows students to attend college
• Allows the working individuals and families to keep more of their hard earned money in their pockets
• Allows people to age in place and continue to have independence

Public transit, after all, extends wide and its influence reaches far. I appreciate that you have elected me as this year’s chairperson. I look forward to working with each of you, and with Lisa, to achieve our goals, objectives and strategies and to assist with furthering innovation and expanding on the services that are provided by and to our FPTA members.

Karen Deigl

2013 APTA Florida Public Transportation Association Scholarship Winner

Ms. Regan Rappa attends Northeastern University in Boston, MA and is a Candidate for Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration with a current GPA of 3.32. She was sponsored by the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART).

Congratulations to Ms. Rappa for receiving the 2013 APTA/ FPTA Scholarship!
We wanted to go "green" so we chose hybrid technology. HybriDrive Series-E takes hybrid technology to the next level. We can now power our accessories electrically and are on the path to more electric capability. BAE Systems made it easy for me to integrate hybrid technology, and it provides responsive technical support; it was the right choice for Lancaster.

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2013 Operator of the Year
2013 Operator of the Year  Anthony Varcalli
Lee Tran
2nd Place  Errol Thomas
LYNX
3rd Place  Charles Hunt
Miami-Dade Transit

2013 Mechanic of the Year
2013 Mechanic of the Year (tie)  Kenneth Smith
StarMetro
Tom Clayton
Sarasota County Area Transit
2nd Place  Eddy Alfonso
Miami-Dade Transit
3rd Place  Jacob Green
Manatee County Area Transit

2013 Most Improved- Safety Award
Group 1  Palm Tran
Group 2  Gainesville Regional Transit System
Group 3  Key West Transit

2013 Bus Safety Award
1st Place - Group 1  Palm Tran
2nd Place - Group 1  Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
1st Place - Group 2  Gainesville Regional Transit System
2nd Place - Group 2  Manatee County Area Transit
3rd Place - Group 2  Lee Tran
1st Place - Group 3  Key West Transit
2nd Place - Group 3  SunTran

2013 Innovation and Creativity Award
Miami-Dade Transit

2013 Outstanding System of the Year
Broward County Transit

2013 Marketing Awards

2013 First Place in Class 1
ESCAMBIA COUNTY AREA TRANSIT Print: Advertising Collateral
HART Print: Advertising Collateral
TRI-RAIL 2013 First Place in Class 1
MIAMI-DADE TRANSIT Print: Advertising

2013 First Place in Class 2
POLK COUNTY-SMART SHUTTLE Print: Instructional Information
MIAMI-DADE TRANSIT Print: Instructional Information

2013 First Place in Class 1
VOTRAN Internal/Employee Communications
Palm Tran 2013 First Place in Class 2
Palm Tran 2013 First Place in Class 1

2013 First Place in Class 2
SPACE COAST AREA TRANSIT Electronic Media/Audio Visual
Palm Tran 2013 First Place in Class 1

2013 First Place in Class 1
Space Coast Area Transit

2013 Best of the Best
Space Coast Area Transit
The LYNX Kissimmee Intermodal Station is an eight-bay super stop located in the heart of downtown Kissimmee. It will be the new transfer hub for all of LYNX’ Osceola County service. The facility was built as a point of access for the people of Kissimmee to easily transfer to several modes of transportation. These options will include the highly anticipated SunRail commuter rail system, Greyhound, Amtrak and any additional transportation systems established in the future.

The facility will be home to plenty of passenger amenities including informational kiosks, benches, safety lighting, seating and CCTV cameras. The station will also have 14 bus shelters and the ability to fit 60-foot articulated buses in three of the bus bays. One of the unique features is that LYNX was able to preserve two large oak trees which provide a cool shady area.

Service out of the $2.5M federally funded transfer facility will begin on Jan. 12, 2014.

Better System, Better Customer Service - Broward County Transit Upgrades Call Center Module

Broward County Transit (BCT) upgraded its customer service telephone center to enhance the process when handling incoming customer comments, complaints, and compliments.

This new and improved computer module allows the customer service agents to input detailed descriptions of calls and to organize the calls by date, time, type of call, bus operator numbers, and to prioritize each call. They are able to refer comments to specific staff for investigation and resolution. Comment reports based on call categories, date and time received, comment number, customer name and phone number can be pulled for statistical reporting.

The module also allows the call center agent to identify whether the comment is new, transferred, assigned, in progress, on hold, cancelled, closed, or unfounded. This will effectively provide BCT with a tracking report on the status of the calls to ensure resolution has been reached, as well as a means to respond to customers to enhance customer service and satisfaction.

Customer service remains a priority and this new call center module is part of BCT’s commitment to put transit passengers first and continue to constantly improve the system.
On Friday, November 22, 2013 the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) celebrated an important milestone: one million trips taken on the Skyway in 2013.

“The JTA’s Skyway system is an efficient and vital mode of transportation for Jacksonville’s Downtown community.” said JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford Sr. “As we reach this important highlight for 2013, we want to personally thank our Skyway customers for their continued support and ridership.”

In appreciation of the millionth trip, JTA staff visited each Skyway station to greet valued customers, and hand out gift bags to commemorate the special occasion.

JTA Celebrates One Million Trips on the Skyway in 2013

Miami Dolphins Offer Free Shuttles from Tri-Rail to Sun Life Stadium

Tri-Rail partnered with the Miami Dolphins to provide service from the Golden Glades Tri-Rail Station to Sun Life Stadium for all Dolphins home games this season. The service provides event-goers with a safe, efficient and cost-effective way to beat the traffic while supporting their winning team. This was made possible due to the recent enhancement of the Tri-Rail’s Weekend schedule with the addition of hourly train service.

The Miami Dolphins sponsor free shuttle service from the train station beginning approximately 3 hours before the game to give fans time to arrive for tailgating. The last shuttles leave the stadium approximately one hour after the end of each game.

The regional train system can accommodate passengers from Palm Beach and Broward counties, as well as travelers from the south end of Miami-Dade County, who can connect by using the northbound ‘Green Line’ Metrorail service to get to Tri-Rail.

Special train service was available after the game for the home opener on Sunday, September 22, and the Thursday night game on Halloween, October 31. Regular zoned fares applied for that game, but on the weekends Tri-Rail fares are $5 for all day travel and $2.50 for pre-qualified discount riders. EASY Card holders expedite their transfers to and from Metrorail by pre-loading their cards with stored value. There is free parking at all 17 Tri-Rail Stations. Event-goers are required to show a valid Tri-Rail ticket prior to boarding the free shuttle buses.

Tri-Rail has been carrying between 350 – 500 passengers to each home game. Providing service to sports events is not new to Tri-Rail. In 2009, approximately 800 people rode the train to attend the Pro Bowl and the following weekend almost 2000 ticket holders rode Tri-Rail to attend the Super Bowl. In the past, Tri-Rail has also operated special to service the Orange Bowl.

For more information on Tri-Rail schedules and connections, Tri-Rail’s Customer Service Department is available on weekdays from 4:00 am to 11:30 pm, and weekends from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm at 1-800-TRI-RAIL (874-7245).
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Florida Transit Systems Save Money Going Green

In this era of tight budgets and fluctuating fuel prices, transit authorities are under tremendous pressure to decrease operating costs, making it very difficult to focus on going green. The transportation industry by its very nature is in the conservation business, helping decrease oil use and emissions by reducing the amount of vehicles on the road. Hybrid buses are one way to achieve these goals, but they tend to be expensive and do not address the existing fleet. Several Florida transit authorities have joined forces with EMP, a supplier of the mini-Hybrid cooling system, and Electric Sales and Service (ESS) to implement a solution. This retrofittable technology replaces the mechanical fan with a series of heavy-duty grade, long life, controllable electric fans in a drop-in package. By significantly reducing the parasitic loss of the inefficient mechanical fan, more power is available to the wheels and much higher fuel economy is achieved. Saving fuel is one of the best ways to decrease both operating costs and greenhouse gas emissions. Also, the fan system is easy to maintain, diagnose and improves safety by eliminating most of the hydraulic lines. It can be fitted to existing buses or ordered on new buses as well.

Almost six years ago, Miami, Broward and Palm Tran worked closely with EMP and ESS to retrofit a series of NABI, Newflyer and Gillig buses to perform a detailed fuel economy study. Fuel data was collected for many months and analyzed on both the mini-Hybrid system and on conventional buses. The results were amazing with roughly a 10% average fuel economy improvement! Jon Kavaliunas stated that “EMP’s system is a major part of Palm Tran’s ability to meet their goals for reduced operating cost and achieving a green initiative.” Alex Bengochea from Broward added that, “The EMP system is saving Broward over $500K per year on their fleet.” Payback is very quick and the product qualifies for federal funding. Palm Tran now has over 100 buses running the EMP system and Broward close to 200. By the end of 2013 there will be over 600 buses with the system in Florida including MDT, Lynx, JTA, Daytona, Tallahassee and Gainesville along with a large theme park near Orlando.

This mini-Hybrid system has been recognized by the EPA as a device that can decrease emissions winning a “Clean Air Excellence” award. David Allen, EMP’s Regional Manager, stated that “It is partners like Broward and Palm Trans that allow us to truly demonstrate the real benefits of our technology. Through their leadership we were able to provide feedback and data to the entire industry.” The EMP system is now on over 8500 buses in 125 cities across the US including NYC, LA, Atlanta and Boston. The technology has been widely accepted as the majority of all new buses purchased in the US have the EMP system. For more information contact David Allen at david.allen@emp-corp.com or Ray Ibberson at essmiami@aol.com.

Save the Date!

- April 4-5, 2014 (Daytona Beach, FL): 2014 Triple Crown Roadeo
- April 28-30, 2014 (Miami, FL): TBR 10th National Conference on Transportation Asset Management
- June 2-4, 2014 (Tampa, FL): FPTA/FDOT/CUTR Professional Development Workshop & Safety Network Workshop

Are you a Business Class Member of FPTA and would like to submit an article regarding new or innovative products in the transit industry? If so, please send your article to: Lisa Bacot, Executive Director, at lisabacot@floridatransit.org.
Compliance vs. Complete Solution

While other wheelchair securement stations for transit merely assure compliance with ADA requirements, the right system will deliver a complete solution.

Beyond just the need for securement, it is important to consider the big picture when it comes to securing mobility passengers. Transit managers are specifying the Q’POD because it is helping them:

- Drastically lower securement times by up to 50%
- Reduce liability either due to deficient equipment or improper use
- Keep buses on proper route schedules due to reduced dwell times
- Avoid invasions of their mobility passenger’s personal “space”
- Increase the ratio of riders requesting securement (when optional)
- Reduce driver frustration as well as their risk of personal injury

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<tr>
<th>Compliance with ADA Requirements</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Q’POD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So transit operators can meet Federal requirements</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<th>Stabilizing Bumper</th>
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<td>Makes it almost impossible to tip a chair or scooter and eliminates the need for a 4th securement point making securement faster and keeping routes on schedule</td>
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<th>Front Tensioner</th>
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<td>Drivers can use a single hand in a simple bending motion when attaching or releasing for less intrusion on the rider’s space while assuring maximum stability</td>
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<th>Scooter Ring</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eliminates the need for a fourth belt or quick strap and makes scooter securement as resistant to tipping as a 4 point wheelchair restraint effectively reducing legal and medical costs</td>
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<tr>
<th>Integrated Shoulder Belt</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assures that the belt is the right height for passengers and simplifies the installation by eliminating the need for wall or window bar retractor attachments</td>
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For more information, visit: Qstraint.com/Qpod
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) initiated several promotional events to increase its focus on pedestrian safety during a week-long campaign at both Florida State and University of Florida campuses. These events were geared towards promoting awareness of pedestrian and bicycle safety. Events were conducted during November 23 – 30, 2013, in Tallahassee and Gainesville.

Lisa Bacot, Executive Director of FPTA, assisted with passing out surveys and free Seminole T-Shirts at the FSU vs. Idaho football game on November 23, 2013 at Doak Campbell Stadium. Along with the informational booth, FDOT also flew a banner above the stadium reminding everyone to be Alert Today Alive Tomorrow!

Depending on where you live and work, commuting to work on a bicycle or by foot is an increasingly realistic and feasible option. Those who use transit are more than likely pedestrians or bicyclists at some point during their trip. It is always important to remember the following safety tips:

**PEDESTRIANS**

- **Obey All Traffic Laws.** As a road user you should always obey the pedestrian traffic laws to be safe on the road. If no sidewalks are present walk against the direction of traffic so you can see oncoming vehicles.
- **Always use the crosswalk.** The marked crosswalk at signalized intersections is the safest place to cross.
- **Look, and then look again.** Look left, right then left again before crossing.
- **Be visible.** Wear bright colors and reflective accessories such as belts, clothes, wristbands and shoes.

**BICYCLISTS**

- **Obey All Traffic Laws.** A bicycle is a vehicle and you’re a driver. You should ride in the same direction of traffic on the street; obey all traffic signs, signals, and lane markings.
- **Yield to Traffic When Appropriate.** It’s better to yield than “be in the right” and risk injury.
- **Be Predictable.** Ride in a straight line and be sure those around you understand your intentions.
- **Be Visible.** Spend a little extra on lights to get a bright headlight and taillight, and always use them at night. Position yourself in the lane so others can easily see you, especially at intersections.
- **Watch for Parked Cars.** Don’t ride in the “door zone” of parked cars even when the bike lane is adjacent to them.

**DRIVERS**

- **Obey All Traffic Laws.** Stop or yield for pedestrians and bicycles and obey laws to be safe.
- **Stop before making a right on red.** Pedestrians and bicyclists using the crosswalks at intersections rely on this time to cross. If you do not stop, you can hit them before you see them.
- **Share the road.** All users including pedestrians and bicyclists are allowed to use the roads safely. Respect and share the road.

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**Advertising Rates and Information**

Our next newsletter will be out in February/March 2014. The newsletter is printed in full color, and past copies may be seen on our website at FloridaTransit.org.

To ensure inclusion we must have final copy no later than February 3rd. Rates are as follows:

- Business Card - $75
- ¼ Page - (4” x 5.5”) - $150
- ½ Page - (8” x 5.5”) - $275
- ½ Page (Back Fold) - $325
- Full Page - (8” x 10.25”) - $400

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The Individual Flip-Up Seat, by American Seating, easily adapts public transit buses to fit large carry-on items, such as carts and strollers, without permanently reducing seating capacity. Keeping the aisles and mobility aid areas clear creates a more accommodating environment for all riders.

The Individual Flip-Up Seat is available on Insight® and Vision®.