

Passenger Transportation Plan - Regional Planning Affiliate 1, UERPC  
Transportation Advisory Group Meeting Notes  
January 24, 2014, 9:00 a.m. - 325 Washington Street, Decorah, Iowa

Present: Dee Hosek (Howard Cty. VA), Sherry Buchheit (Workforce Specialist), Fern Rissman (IowaWORKS), Spiff Slifka (Howard County Business and Tourism), Ashley Eckenrod, (Oelwein Care and Grandview Community Transport), Jennifer Roberts (IDOT), Troy Vande Lune (NICC), Amy Tucker (Upper Iowa – by phone), Karn Pankow (NEICAC Transit), Karla Organist (UERPC)

1. Introductions & recap of last meeting
2. Presentation: Ashley Eckenrod from Grandview and Oelwein Health Care Centers shared information on a new transportation service being provided by the Centers in Oelwein. The service operates 3 vans and a 14-passenger bus, with 4 staff drivers (additional staff members are licensed to drive if needed). The service runs M-F from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and is free to riders 65 and over and to disabled riders. The Transportation Coordinator is Amber Smith. The service will be included on the website. Ashley and Amber, along with Karn attended the interagency meeting in Oelwein to let members know of the availability of the new service. Ridership data is being collected.
3. Job Access Mobility Institute Update:
  - Commuter route continues to move forward. Three “anchor” partners have been identified: NICC in Calmar, Winneshiek Medical Center in Decorah, and Featherlite in Cresco. Currently the anchors are collecting and providing work schedule information to Karn so that the service can be designed. Karn has written a couple of grant applications to help with start-up funds to sustain the program until ridership is built. Target start date is July 1.
  - Image revamp: NEICAC is in the process of evaluating proposals from three entities to develop a marketing plan and develop logos. They hope to have all quotes ready to present their recommendations to the Board at the February meeting. Timeline for completing the plan is 4 to 6 weeks.
  - Jennifer, from DOT Systems Planning, requested information on our projects for the DOT blog
4. Updates on PTP TAG Projects:
  - Mobility Manager Update:
    - Rural technical assistance program through CTAA has not started yet – staff changes and prolonged projects at CTAA have backed up the start date.
    - Wheels for Work program is going well, have 3 loans and 6 applications in for review. A marketing campaign will be out shortly about leveraging income tax returns on a loan.
    - UIU West Union shuttle is not happening this year, but we hope to revisit the idea in the future.
    - Vets in 7 communities took advantage of the free rides in the “Public Transportation Supports America’s Veterans” campaign on Veteran’s day.
  - Marketing: Committee met to discuss the NE Iowa Transportation Portal website just this morning to review pages that have been framed. Many of the short URLs are in use, so the plan is to use something like “NortheastIowaGo” and reserve several URLs that are similar (NEIowaGO, NEIAGO...). Karn showed the committee the page ideas.
  - Collaborations/Stakeholder Outreach: Discussed “Days on the Hill” – transportation is on everyone’s list in some capacity. Troy reported on a meeting he attended recently for community colleges where transportation came up as a barrier.
5. Items from committee members:
  - Spiff shared information about the Grow Howard County meeting held last Saturday and the county’s participation in the state broadband initiative and the Home-based Veteran’s Program. Fern will send Spiff and Jason some information on the Skilled Iowa Community program
  - Troy asked about pots of money for emergency car repairs – workforce and NEICAC programs were mentioned
  - Jennifer provided updates from the DOT – PTPs (for those who have them due this year) will be reviewed in February; they are working on a statewide Park & Ride plan and a statewide Bike and Ped. Plan; she is also

serving as a transportation specialist on a refuge services initiative – although in one community now – they are seeking to broaden their scope.

- Karn reported that NEICAC had decided not to take on Medicare transportation at this time due to the high operational costs that were being newly imposed on them versus the reimbursement. *Update: NEICAC and the agency in charge of setting up rides may be able to come to an agreement that works for both parties.*
- WORST NEWS EVER for our committee: Karn reported that she has given notice and will be resigning from her position at NEICAC. She will be there through the end of February and possibly part time afterwards to help with the transition to a new Mobility Manager.

6. Because of Karn's news, Item 7 on the agenda was missed – Karla will keep the committee informed of the LRTP public review plan and timeline via email.
7. The next meeting will be set before Karn leaves, and hopefully a new Mobility Manager will be on staff so that both will be at that meeting. It will be on a Friday morning at 9:00 – date TBD.