

TRANSIT LANE

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
North Dakota State University

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SURTC Celebrates Five Years



Ron Hynes, FTA

SURTC celebrated its fifth anniversary April 30 with a brunch at the NDSU Alumni Center with Federal Transit Administration Acting 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."

At the FTA, Hynes said key issues will continue to be energy efficiency, safety and good use of the nation's roads. He said there is concern over the cost of transit projects, but noted that those costs need to be weighed in relation to the nation's costs in traffic congestion as well as costs in terms of reduced traffic safety.

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 and outreach, and education activities. "I'm very proud of our accomplishments during these past five years," Hough said. "Demographic trends 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, as well as other North Dakota DOT and FTA officials, traveled to Valley City to visit the South Central Adult Service Council, an example of a rural transit agency. Lisa Colbert, a transportation management specialist with the FTA, also attended the day's events. ■

SURTC Leader Meets with FTA Administrator

SURTC director Jill Hough and UGPTI director Gene Griffin met with the FTA's top official in January 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 noted. 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



Jim Simpson and Jill Hough

(SURTC Leader continued on Page 2)

additional perspective on rural and small urban transit issues.”

As a result of the meeting, Simpson had made plans to attend SURTC’s fifth anniversary in May, but was ultimately unable to attend because of a conflict. He has, however, vowed to visit SURTC and North Dakota.

Hough had originally met Simpson and arranged the January meeting through their involvement on the Transit Cooperative Research Program Oversight and Project Selection Committee. ■

RESEARCH

Building a Better Bus



SURTC has been working 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:

- State DOTs need to better coordinate procurement efforts with local transit agencies so that specific vehicle needs are not sacrificed to attain volume discounts. DOTs should assemble groups of transit agencies to develop specifications for vehicle procurements.
- Transit agencies and DOT officials need to consider all factors, not just cost, while planning vehicle procurements.
- Transit agencies and procurement officials should consider the small bus market as three segments that include vans, cutaways and small buses. Defining groups of small vehicles used in transit and optimizing vehicles within each group will help eliminate confusion and duplication in the market.
- The FTA should develop a resource for small transit vehicle procurements that includes standards for the industry to follow. Standardization of vehicles would reduce costs and simplify maintenance. By clarifying standards, needs of transit agencies could be considered while allowing manufacturers to standardize various models and classes of small transit vehicles.

The FTA also has asked SURTC to gather input on a prototype design for a bus intended specifically for small transit agencies. "A transit vehicle designed to meet the specific needs of smaller systems will lead to gained efficiencies for transit providers while offering riders greater comfort with improved ride quality and greater vehicle maneuverability for operators," Peterson explains. The results of the study will be presented to the industry as a whole. ■

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 SURTC researcher David Ripplinger.

He worked with graduate research assistant Natalie Beck and SURTC director Jill Hough to examine USDA, U.S. Census Bureau 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. ■



Examining the Mobility of Rural Elderly Women

SURTC director Jill Hough studied the growing proportion of elderly women living in rural areas to assess their mobility concerns and needs.

As 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. The situation is bound to have an influence on their mobility and the 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. Hough conducted the research as part of her work toward a doctoral degree from the University of California-Davis.

She interviewed more than 1,000 women, half living in rural areas and half living in small urban areas. The research focused on women because their need for mobility is often particularly acute in rural areas. Women tend to live longer than men and many widowed women live alone. Studies also indicate that women tend to have more health-related problems that impact their driving.

Hough says the research examined factors that influence the mobility of women living in rural areas such as social networks (family, friends, neighbors, etc.) and environmental factors.

The research showed levels of mental acuity and self-efficacy (confidence in their abilities) have a significant impact on mobility. Those with high levels of mental acuity and self-efficacy tend to have an easier time of accomplishing desired mobility and have a lower level of desired mobility, Hough explains.

“Consequently, activities that keep women working on their mental acuity and staving off the effects of aging could have a significant impact on individuals’ ability to achieve their desired levels of mobility,” Hough says.

Likewise, efforts designed to help elderly women stay confident in their driving skills are important. Hough says women frequently decide to stop driving at a younger age than men. “If we can keep them driving safely and maintain their confidence in their abilities, we may be able to help them maintain their mobility.”



In rural areas, the physical environment is often a barrier to mobility. Women may live in desolate locations with few services. Weather can make any travel difficult. 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, we found that women’s social network is very important to mobility,” she says. “Many rely on family and friends for mobility, but we found that it was also important for many women to rely on their larger social network,” Hough said. ■

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 them to school efficiently.

“Declines in enrollment paired with a steady or decreasing tax base and increases in costs of education make efficiency a high priority,” says SURTC researcher David Ripplinger. “Fuel costs, for example, can have a significant impact on school budgets. 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.”

(Getting to School continued on Page 4)





(Getting to School continued)

Larger schools often have computerized systems for developing bus routes. Costs and the complex nature of such systems are often barriers that prevent small rural schools from using them. Ripplinger developed a system for small rural schools that could also be used by small transit systems. 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 said the experience in Enderlin indicates that route identification and finalization is a labor-intensive process. “While technology plays a key role, work by those with knowledge of the software as well as those involved in transportation management is important. Communication among managers at all stages of the process is critical,” he says.

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. In Enderlin, the routes developed by the software were not put into effect immediately, but several significant improvements in efficiency were identified.

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. “Given the challenges facing school transportation providers and other agencies that provide transportation, it is likely we’ll see increased levels of coordination in the future,” Ripplinger says. “Tools like our software will help assure that those collaborations are as efficient and effective as possible.” ■

Exploring Relationships Between Transportation and Apartment Choice

SURTC researcher Xinyu Cao is exploring how the availability of various forms of transportation influences the residential choices of apartment dwellers.

He notes that home renters are more mobile than home owners and are more likely to attempt strike balances among their choice of residence, transportation and other lifestyle factors. Consequently, when deciding where to live, home renters are more likely to rank transportation choice an important factor than home owners.

It is less clear how residents of small urban areas (relatively close to workplace and local services) respond to transportation attributes of residential environment, Cao notes. Given that many home renters are low-income people, transit access and the level of service may have important impacts on their residential and travel choices. However, few studies have focused on apartment dwellers’ trade-offs between residential choice and transit choice.

Cao expects the results of this project will offer implications for various agencies, including:

- Transportation planners: How important is transit accessibility in the residential choice of apartment dwellers? Who values transit accessibility? What is the contribution of transit accessibility to property values?



- Urban planners and community developers: What kinds of people do communities want to attract? Where to zone and build apartments: near a commercial center, near a park, near a transit station?
- Property managers: How to price the apartment based on apartment attributes and neighborhood amenities? ■

EDUCATION

Transit Class Offered Spring Semester

SURTC continues to introduce transit to college students via its “Introduction to 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.

Six students at Pennsylvania State University, one from Utah State University, and one from NDSU were enrolled in the course. Two employees from the North Dakota Department of Transportation also sat in on the class. The class was taught and coordinated by Jim Miller, a retired faculty member from Pennsylvania State University who is an affiliated faculty with SURTC.

At least one session of the class was observed electronically by several transit professionals from across the country. “We experimented a little bit with opening up segments of the course to professionals who wanted to learn about a single topic or two,” Miller said. “The technology gives us that ability.”

The technology also allowed the class to be addressed by FTA Administrator Jim Simpson. He provided an overview of the FTA and its national initiatives via an electronic link to FTA offices in Washington. His address was on April 30, the day that SURTC celebrated its fifth anniversary. FTA Acting Associate Administrator Ron Hynes attended the class in person at NDSU that day.

As an assignment in the class, students were asked to complete a case study cost analysis of River Cities Public Transit in Pierre, SD. Miller and other SURTC staff members have been working with that transit agency to develop a transit plan. “This illustrates how our research and outreach work helps us add some real-world examples and experiences to the classroom,” Miller said.

SURTC will likely offer the course again in the spring semester of 2008. ■

Events Calendar

MPTA - 2007 Annual Bus Rodeo
July 21, 2007 • Willmar, MN

DTA - 2007 Bus Rodeo
September 15-16, 2007 • Dickinson, ND

DTA - 2007 Annual Conference
September 17-20, 2007 • Dickinson, ND

URSTA - Fall Conference and Rodeo
September 21-22, 2007 • Salt Lake City, UT

APTA - Annual Meeting & EXPO 2007
October 7-10, 2007 • Charlotte, NC

ITSA - 2007 National Rural ITS Conference
October 7-10, 2007 • Traverse City, MI

MPTA - 2007 Annual Conference
October 29-31, 2007 • St. Cloud, MN

TRB - 87th Annual Meeting
January 13-17, 2008 • Washington, DC

TRF - 2008 Annual Forum
March 17-19, 2008 • Fort Worth, TX

TRB - 18th National Conference on Rural Public
& Intercity Bus Transportation
October 19-22, 2008 • Omaha, NE

Please check www.surtc.org for updates



SURTC's Staff Looks Back on First 5 Years



Jill Hough

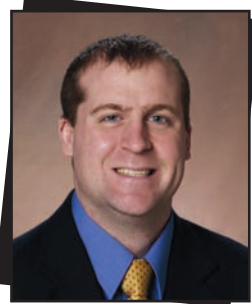
Jill Hough

Joined SURTC: 2002

“Developing the original proposal for SURTC and helping to secure funding and support was a fascinating process that gave me a greater appreciation for the importance of transit

in small urban and rural areas.

Consequently, it has been my privilege to be able to hire and lead an excellent staff and participate in the many research, outreach and education and training efforts we've launched. My own research into the mobility of rural elderly women has been a personal learning experience and an opportunity to contribute to a group that is largely underserved and underrecognized. It's also been exciting to help foster the relationship that's grown between SURTC and many transit-related agencies and organizations such as FTA, APTA, CTAA and Easter Seals Project ACTION.”



David Ripplinger

David Ripplinger

Joined SURTC: 2004

“Since joining SURTC, I've conducted research and provided training on topics from routing to service design, ITS to demography. When I first came to SURTC my primary interest was in academically-

oriented research. While I still enjoy closing my door and crunching numbers for hours on end, I've come to equally enjoy working with service providers and collaborating with my colleagues to address many of the practical challenges facing our industry. Even with all the hard work that has been done to improve personal mobility in our nation, the environment in which we operate continues to evolve and the need for mobility solutions continues to grow making the work we do at SURTC as necessary and important as it was when we began five years ago.”



Jon Mielke

Jon Mielke

Joined SURTC: 2004

“Since joining SURTC, I have served as the principal investigator on North Dakota's personal mobility study, a transit development plan for the Turtle Mountain Reservation, and a

vanpooling feasibility study. I also contributed to North Dakota's transit coordination study and Pierre, South Dakota's, transit coordination study. While each of these projects were significant in their own right, I consider my most significant contribution to SURTC and the transit industry to be a desire to improve personal mobility for residents of small urban and rural areas and my efforts to work with planners and service providers to design and operate transit systems that efficiently and effectively respond to residents' unmet mobility needs.”



Del Peterson

Del Peterson

Joined SURTC: 2003

“During the past 4 1/2 years I have completed various projects including a fixed-route development plan for James River Transit, campus transit studies for all three major

universities in the Fargo-Moorhead area, and research pertaining to the small transit vehicle industry. The satisfaction I've felt when a transit agency representative tells me that our hands-on research has aided their agency in being more effective and efficient while serving their clientele makes all of our contributions seem worthwhile.”





Carol Wright

Carol Wright

Joined SURTC: 2006

“ I’m developing an introduction to transit management course and working with colleagues to develop a transportation glossary and resource manual

and a workshop for tribal transit professionals. My most significant contribution has been the ability to work with talented transit professionals from across the region to help them share their excellent and innovative ideas with others to improve the mobility of their clients. ”



Gary Hegland

Gary Hegland

Joined SURTC: 2002

“ In many ways my time at SURTC has seemed like a four year college education. I have conducted surveys, written reports, led state-wide research projects, and conducted training in many states. I have gone

through certifications, become executive director of Dakota Transit Association (DTA), attended state and national conferences and networked with transit leaders across the nation. About 18 months ago, I coordinated the first Passenger Assistance and Safety Certification train-the-trainer program for the region. Since then I have worked with DTA through SURTC to assist with coordinating and certifying the training of over 250 bus drivers in the Dakotas. I’m currently serving on a quality assurance committee in the development of a national captive insurance pool for transit operators. Providing safe, reliable and dependable transportation for our seniors, people with disabilities and young low-income families has become a passion for me. ”



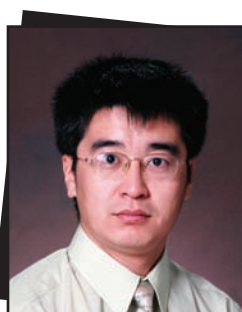
Jim Miller

Jim Miller

Joined SURTC: 2002

“ I spent my career at Penn State working with local transit agencies and state officials on small urban, rural, and specialized transit, so I was pleased to be asked to join SURTC. As the first “employee”

(part time) of SURTC I have had the pleasure of being a part of the start up and growth of an organization that has gained respect and a reputation of excellence not only in its region, but nationally as well. Four SURTC activities and projects stand out for me over the past five years. The first two were the North Dakota statewide mobility plan and the coordination plan. In addition, I have particularly enjoyed my work with local transit agencies. Finally, I have enjoyed the opportunity to teach the introduction to public transit course to undergraduate and graduate students using UGPTI’s Transportation Learning Network video capabilities. ”



Xinyu (Jason) Cao

Xinyu (Jason) Cao

Joined SURTC: 2006

“ Last year, I led several projects: one case study investigated gender-role based difference in activity participation and time allocation; the second examined the effect of neighborhood design on

aging mobility; the third explored residential and transit choices of apartment dwellers in small urban areas. These studies shed light on broad issues in transportation planning. Further, I contributed to SURTC by disseminating my research outcomes in refereed journals, professional conferences, and an invited talk at MIT. ”



TRAINING and OUTREACH

Intro to Transit Management Course to be Offered

Learning by doing may be work, but it may not be the most effective and efficient way to manage a small transit agency. That's why SURTC is developing an "Introduction to Transit Management" course that will be offered this fall.

"The course is designed for new transit managers to allow them to learn the ropes and hit the ground running," notes Carol Wright, SURTC's associate director for training. "It's also for transit people in the industry who are ready to expand their knowledge base."

Sessions have not been scheduled yet, but Wright says plans are to offer the course at various locations across SURTC's service area of the Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Utah. She plans to augment the course with presentations from local transit professionals at each location.

This course is designed to provide a broad-based knowledge of basic concepts related to transit operations, funding, record keeping, compliance issues, etc. SURTC's goal is to develop a certificate program as part of the completion of course requirements.

"Very few people start out saying 'I'm going to manage a transit agency,'" Wright says. "There's no formal training and no degree. They find themselves in the manager position and needing to learn from peers and learning on the fly. Our plan is to offer a more structured approach. When they're finished they know what resources are available and where to go for answers."

The course grew out of SURTC's strategic planning process. Transportation leaders suggested that SURTC

should become the "go-to" source for rural and small urban transit issues. "In working with our clients we realized this was a need," Wright says.

Wright has a Certified Community Transit Manager (CCTM) designation gained by taking training from the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA). The SURTC training will be aimed at the beginning transit managers while the CCTM training is intended for more advanced transportation professionals. ■

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 is compiling a Transportation Glossary and Resource Manual.

"We're taking the many glossaries that are out there in the transit industry and combining them into one resource designed to be the most exhaustive list of terms for the transportation industry," says Carol Wright, SURTC associate director for training and outreach. Extensive searches have been conducted to identify definitions of common terms. The result is a compendium of transit funding resources, performance measures, and accounting principles that will serve as a guide and resource for transit professionals

The glossary is at 210 pages and growing. "We're also providing broad explanations and examples of how the terms are used and how they're applied in the transit industry," Wright says. In addition to terminology and bench marks used in transit management, the glossary includes information on a wide variety of federal and state transit programs and initiatives. Original sources are referenced so users can find additional information.

"Our goal is to take information from a large number of sources and show how they apply in a way that transit professionals need to understand to most effectively manage their agencies."

The glossary is expected to be available later this year. SURTC is exploring partnerships with national transit organizations to make the glossary available as a free and easily accessible resource. ■

"Very few people start out saying 'I'm going to manage a transit agency,' " Wright says.



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, the benefits of coordination, the development of potential transportation coordination partners within their service area, how to initiate coordination, and the continuation of ongoing coordination efforts. Jon Mielke, Gary Hegland and Carol Wright from SURTC facilitated the workshop.

Under provisions of the current federal highway bill, SAFETEA-LU, many tribes are required to develop a plan for the coordination of their transportation services. Before the workshop, SURTC staff members visited tribal transit projects in North Dakota to better understand each of the tribal areas and concerns that were unique to each project. "Overwhelmingly, the type of training requested was a workshop to provide assistance in meeting the coordination requirements," Wright noted.

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. ■

2006 SURTC Annual Report Released

SURTC published its 2006 Annual Report earlier this year, summarizing staff activities over the previous year and highlighting the center's strategic planning process.



"Producing the annual report provides a good snapshot of the year's activities," says director Jill Hough. "It's a chance for us, as an organization, to stop for a moment and take stock of where we've been and what we've accomplished in the past year."

The report was provided to federal and state decision makers and leaders in the transit industry. It is also available online at <http://www.surtc.org/about/annrpt/> ■

SURTC to Conduct DOT Training on State and Federal Requirements

SURTC will be conducting training for transit managers across the state on behalf of the N.D. Department of Transportation (NDDOT) later this year. The training will be designed to help transit agencies comply with new requirements to receive state and federal transit aid.

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 will set up 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.

Wright also notes that the new federal highway bill has several new mandates that all small urban and rural transit projects will need to comply with. "The training sessions will inform managers what new sections will apply to them and what information is required at the state and federal levels," she says. "For example, projects will need to be reporting never-before required statistics which will be entered into the National Transit Database. Our training will help managers learn what's required, how to collect those statistics and how to report them." ■



NDinfo will be Online Transportation Service Directory

SURTC is helping the N.D. Department of Transportation develop a state-wide online transportation service directory.

“The NDinfo.org web site will enable individuals to access information about available transit services across the state,” notes David Ripplinger, the SURTC researcher who is directing the project. “We’re testing a prototype of the web site now and surveying some preliminary users to get feedback on how we can improve our initial efforts.”

That feedback will be used to make the web site as complete and user friendly as possible. “We anticipate that users will be 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 web site will be a resource to improve the mobility of users as well as the efficiency of transit providers.

Development of the web site was supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Federal Transit Administration. ■

STAFF

Ulmer Named to Web Developer Post



Dustin Ulmer

SURTC graduate research assistant Dustin Ulmer was hired as a web developer by SURTC’s parent organization, the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute. Part of his time is focused on SURTC’s NDinfo 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 web site for the Federal Highway Administration’s Local Technical Assistance Program Clearinghouse.

Ulmer first 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 Welcomes New Board Members

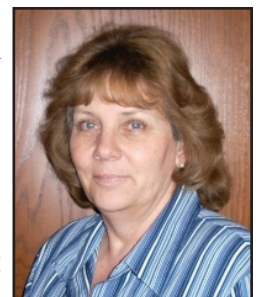


Joe Dougherty

Joe Dougherty of Wyoming, B. Leone Gibson of Utah, and Audrey Allums of Montana recently join the SURTC advisory board.

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. Dougherty is a Cheyenne native and attended Laramie County Community College. In 1988 he was elected to the Cheyenne City Council, where he served as Public Services Committee Chairman, Vice President and President of the City Council. In 1993 Dougherty became Executive Assistant to Mayor Leo Pando, serving in that capacity for 8 years. Dougherty and his late wife, Ann, raised two children in Cheyenne, and today he enjoys being around his three grandchildren.

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. At Six County Association of Governments in the central part of the State, she administered federal and state programs providing services to the elderly and low-income populations. As vice chair for the Community Services State Association, she provided oversight and direction for human service agencies. As a member of the State of Utah Social Service Block Grant Human Services Planning Committee she engaged in evaluation and



B. Leone Gibson



necessary adjustment of state policies to better serve the target population.

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, Transit Plans and Programs that 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 URTA 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.

Audrey Allums is currently the Transit Section Supervisor for the Montana Department of Transportation. Originally from Flandreau, SD, she is a graduate of Chadron State College, Chadron, NE. She is currently completing her master's degree in transportation policy, operations and logistics at the School of Public Policy at George Mason University. Allums has spent the last sixteen 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. Audrey spent two years with the State Highway Traffic Safety Office and recently moved to Transit Section Supervisor. In her free time, Allums travels with her husband, Richard, and enjoys the Montana outdoors. ■



Audrey Allums

SURTC Staff Members Participate in National Meetings

SURTC staff members presented papers at or contributed their expertise to several national transportation meetings this spring.

SURTC director **Jill Hough** chaired and participated in a panel discussion on "Senior Mobility: Important Issues for an Aging Population" at the annual meeting of the Transportation Research Forum (TRF) in Boston March 15-17. **Carol Wright** filled in as a presenter when another

presenter was delayed due to weather. The meeting was attended by more than 100 transportation leaders representing academia, industry and government.

Researcher **Xinyu "Jason" Cao** presented his research on residential and travel choices of elderly residents of Northern California during a session on emerging transportation issues at the TRF meeting. Cao completed the research for his dissertation at the University of California – Davis before joining SURTC.

Researcher **Del Peterson** presented information on the advanced small transit vehicle development study at the American Public Transportation Association Bus & Paratransit Conference in Nashville, TN. His presentation was part of a panel discussion on small transit vehicle advancements. The study is focused on developing standards for a small transit vehicle that is both economical to produce and meets the needs of small transit providers.

Peterson also presented information on the study at an advanced small transit vehicle stakeholder meeting at the Community Transportation Expo in Reno, NV. That event is conducted by the Community Transportation Association of America. ■

Hough Earns Ph.D.

SURTC director Jill Hough graduated from the University of California - Davis June 14 with a Ph.D. in transportation technology and policy. Thirteen of Hough's family members attended the ceremony.



Jill Hough

Susan Handy, professor of environmental science and policy was Hough's major professor. Pat Mokhtarian, professor of civil and environmental engineering, and Daniel Sperling, director of the Institute of Transportation Studies and professor of civil and environmental engineering and environmental science and policy, also served on her advisory committee. Hough's dissertation is titled "Realized Travel Demand and Relative Desired Mobility of Elderly Women living in Rural and Small Urban North Dakota." ■



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