

## SURTC is Partner in U.S. DOT Grant to Study Transit

SURTC is one of four consortium members that will cooperatively conduct research and provide training and outreach related to public transit under a \$3.5 million grant awarded in January by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

NDSU is a partner with the University of Illinois at Chicago and Florida International University in Miami. The University of South Florida in Tampa will lead the effort. SURTC will provide expertise in rural and small urban transportation and will receive about \$700,000 from the grant.

The grant was one of 22 awarded in the University Transportation Centers Program administered by the DOT's Research and Innovative Technology Administration and was one of two grants specifically targeted

to consortiums that will study public transportation.

"SURTC has developed expertise in transit



Jill Hough

management and coordination, among other areas specifically related to transit providers in rural and small urban areas," notes SURTC Director Jill Hough. "Our participation in this effort brings added knowledge and awareness to assure

that the issues faced by rural and small urban transit providers are addressed."

(Grant continued on page 4)

### Inside this issue:

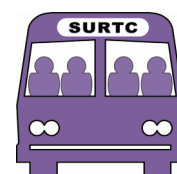
Message from the Director	2
LEP Workshops	2
Tribal Transit Training	2
Alternative Fuels and Hybrids Studied	3
SURTC Participation at TRB and TRF	3
Webinar on Tribal Transit	3

### Recent highlights from the SURTC Blog:

- Register now for the APTA Universities conference
- Call for papers: Rural and Intercity Bus edition of the Journal of Public Transportation
- Webinar on Transit, Technology & Public Participation
- Dr. Hough quoted in NPR story

Visit our blog at:  
[blog.surtc.org](http://blog.surtc.org)

Editors: Jeremy Mattson and Tom Jirik



[www.surtc.org](http://www.surtc.org)

## Guest Speakers and Mentorship Program Featured in Transit Class

Students enrolled in NDSU's graduate-level Public Transportation class, taught by Dr. Jill Hough, are learning about theory and practice from lectures, a mentorship program, and class projects.



Barry Barker

Guest lecturers, such as Barry Barker, general manager of the Transit Authority of River Cities in Kentucky, and Bob Prince, vice president of AECOM

in Boston, participated in the class in person. Others, such as Linda Bohlinger, vice president of HNTB in California, and Ralph Buehler, professor at Virginia Tech,

participated via video-conference.

Bohlinger and Buehler used their lectures to test portions of the National Transit Curriculum being developed.

Students were matched with industry mentors from around the country and interacted via email and phone to better understand real-life and real-time transit issues. In May, the students travel to meet their mentors at the APTA Bus and Paratransit Conference. The Mountain-Plains Consortium is sponsoring the student travel.



Bob Prince

## Message from the Director

Greetings! It has been a busy winter and the momentum continues. SURTC has entered into a new consortium partnership with the National Center for Transit Research, completed more training sessions, finished research projects, offered webinars, and hired more student researchers. In May, SURTC will celebrate 10 years of service. We have enjoyed working with you over the past 10 years and look forward to serving you in the future. As always, let us know if there is something more we can do to serve you. Thanks for reading!



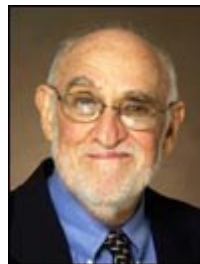
Jill Hough

## SURTC Conducts Limited English Proficiency Workshops

In late January and early February, Carol Wright and Alan Abeson conducted four days of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) training across Texas for the Texas Department of Transportation (TXDOT). Full-day classes were provided in San Antonio, Houston, Lubbock and Dallas. A fifth session will be offered in Austin in July.

This specialized training was developed in response to a request from TXDOT for training to assist their

public transit providers in meeting federal regulations. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 13166 require that all federal agencies examine the services they provide and develop and implement a system by which individuals who have limited ability to read, write, speak or understand



Alan Abeson

English can meaningfully access those services. All public transit systems, regardless of size, are required to have a LEP plan.

The LEP training was customized for the state of Texas, but SURTC can modify it to address Census data, mapping and literacy statistics for any specific location. Participants receive detailed take-home resources, including sample LEP plans and templates for implementing their own LEP plan.

## Tribal Transit Courses Taught in Arizona and South Dakota

Carol Wright and Keven Anderson presented a workshop, *Tribal Transit: Challenges and Best Practices*, at the National Rural Transit Assistance Program (NRTAP) 1<sup>st</sup> Technical Assistance and Tribal Transit Program Conference in Scottsdale, AZ March 18-21.

They were joined by Debbie McGlasson, director of Pelivan Transit, a tribal transit program in Oklahoma. McGlasson shared Pelivan's many successes with coordination.

Wright also presented *Choosing Your Attitude – Creating a Positive Work Environment*.

Wright and Anderson also taught *Tribal Transit: Principles of Transit Management* in conjunction with the 2012 Tribal/BIA Transportation Conference in Rapid City, SD April 10-12.

This intensive three-day course covers virtually all aspects of transit management for operators of tribal

transit programs across the country. Special attention is placed on tribal governance, financial and human resource management, and operations and service design.



## New Graduate Research Assistants Join SURTC

SURTC welcomes Elvis Ndembe and Brett Korporaal as new graduate research assistants.

Ndembe has been with the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute since 2009



Elvis Ndembe

while pursuing a PhD in transportation and logistics. He began working with SURTC this semester as a graduate research assistant and a teaching assistant for the public transportation course.

Korporaal is pursuing a MS degree in transportation and urban systems. He is actively involved in research



Brett Korporaal

projects and is especially interested in urban transportation planning, transit systems, and high speed rail.

## Alternative Fuels and Hybrid Buses Studied

SURTC researcher Jeremy Mattson surveyed 115 small urban and rural transit agencies to better understand the problems and benefits with using biodiesel, E85, propane, natural gas, and hybrid vehicles in smaller communities. The survey was conducted as transit agencies of all sizes across the country are considering using alternative fuels or hybrid electric vehicles. Mattson found that smaller agencies may face greater difficulties in transitioning to alternative fuels or hybrids because of infrastructure costs, reliability and maintenance issues, or other concerns. The recently completed study described the use of alternative fuels and hybrids by these transit providers; identified motivating

factors and deterrents for adoption; described the experience of transit agencies using these alternatives, including costs, fuel economy, maintenance, reliability, and overall satisfaction; and examined differences between those agencies that use these alternatives and those that do not, as well as differences between rural and small urban areas.



Larger agencies and those operating in urban areas are more likely to adopt alternatives than smaller, rural providers. Improving public perception, reducing emissions, and reducing operating costs tend to be the greatest motivating factors for adoption, while concerns about infrastructure and vehicle costs, maintenance, and fuel supply are the greatest deterrents. Those agencies that have adopted alternative fuels or hybrids have been mostly satisfied, but some problems were identified.

The full report is available at [www.surtc.org](http://www.surtc.org). For more information, contact Mattson at [jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu](mailto:jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu)

## SURTC Participates at TRB and TRF Annual Meetings

SURTC staff participated at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting January 22-26 in Washington, DC, and the 53rd Annual Transportation Research Forum (TRF) March 15-17 in Tampa, FL.

Jeremy Mattson gave three presentations at TRB on recently completed research, including "Marginal Cost Pricing and Subsidy of Small Urban Transit," "Transportation

and Health Care Use for Older Adults in Small Communities," and



Jeremy Mattson

"Application of Attitudinal Structural Equation Modeling to Intercity Transportation Market Segmentation." Director Jill Hough was involved in the

Rural and Intercity Bus Public Transportation Committee and the Rural and Intercity Bus Conference Planning Subcommittee.

At TRF, Del Peterson presented his "Ride or Relocate" study, which highlighted senior transportation and housing options in North Dakota.

More details can be found on the SURTC blog at [blog.surtc.org](http://blog.surtc.org)

## Webinar on Tribal Transit & Prospects for Future Funding Conducted

SURTC partnered with CTAA and the Northern Plains Tribal Technical Assistance program March 28 to present a webinar on tribal transit and prospects for future funding. A recording of the webinar is available at [www.surtc.org/training](http://www.surtc.org/training)

SURTC researcher Jon Mielke presented the findings of a recent study regarding the impacts of the 5311(c) tribal transit program that was created in 2005 by the SAFETEA-LU federal highway and transit funding bill. The study also identified

future funding requirements based on varying levels of tribal participation and the availability of funding from other sources.

Jim Glaze, a tribal transit attorney and partner with the Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Endreson, & Perry, LLP, law firm briefed participants on the status of various versions of pending federal reauthorization. The timing of Glaze's presentation was especially timely given legislation that is currently pending before Congress.

Approximately 100 people participated in the webinar. In addition to the recorded webinar, related PowerPoint presentations and the complete report are available on the SURTC website.





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## APTA Universities Conference to be held in Fargo (Grant continued)

Registration is now open for the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) 2012 Public Transportation & Universities Conference. This conference will be held June 16-19 in Fargo, ND.

This biennial conference focuses on the unique needs of university communities and the population they serve.

Please mark your calendar and plan to attend. For more details and to register, visit the conference web page at [www.apta.com/mc/university/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.apta.com/mc/university/Pages/default.aspx)

Make sure to register by May 11, 2012 to pay the discounted early registration fee.



Overall, the partnership will focus on the following topic areas:

- Enhancing transit safety
- Developing procedures and approaches to help agencies better care for their fleets and facilities
- Exploring how transit can enhance economic competitiveness of business, regions or communities
- Enhancing the livability of regions or communities through transit
- Improving environmental sustainability of transportation systems and transit operations.

"In each of these areas we will bring a rural or small community focus," Hough noted. "We will also gain ideas from our partners that may be transferable to the smaller transit providers that we serve. Each of the four partner universities brings unique strengths and accomplishments to this consortium, but by working together we will enhance our overall collective contribution to the transit industry." Hough said.