



TRANSIT PEER EXCHANGE REPORT

JANUARY 21, 2015

MENOMINEE CONVENTION CENTER



Prepared by: Agnes Fleming, ITTF Coordinator

Program Overview



WisDOT ITTF – INTER-TRIBAL TASK FORCE TRANSIT PEER EXCHANGE January 21, 2015



WisDOT ITTF (Inter-Tribal Task Force) is currently working to enhance Tribal transit programs, resources and opportunities in Wisconsin. These efforts include assessing current challenges, programs and needs.

WisDOT ITTF is organizing a **Tribal Transit Peer Exchange** to bring together transit representatives from Wisconsin's tribes and other stakeholders to exchange resources and information regarding their respective transit programs, needs and activities and use this information to begin addressing challenges, creating best practices and exploring enhancement opportunities.

8:00 am	Continental Breakfast
9:00 am	Opening/Introduction
9:15 am	WisDOT ITTF overview of transit goals and objectives
9:30 am	Federal Transit Authority (FTA) – Overview of federal programs, funding, up and coming topics to be identified by FTA
10:30 am	WisDOT Transit - Elderly Transit , state/federal programming, challenges, benefits, up and coming topics to be identified by WisDOT
11:30 am	Tribal Transit Program Overview
12:00 am	Lunch Provided
1:00 pm	Tribal Transit Program Round Table Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What transit programs are provided within Wisconsin Tribal communities? • How are those programs funded? • To what areas are transit services offered? • Challenges, Benefits, Best Practices
3:30 pm	Wrap up/ Identify Next Steps
4:30 pm	Federal Transit Authority Technical Services – FTA representatives will be available to provide technical support for the recent Notice of Funding Availability for FTA's Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Tribal Transit Program Application Process (Deadline: February 18, 2015) For more information go to: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-12-09/pdf/2014-28792.pdf

WHO SHOULD ATTEND: Tribal leadership, Tribal Transit program representatives, WisDOT Tribal Task Force members, WisDOT Transit program representatives and local transit partners

SCHOLARSHIPS: WisDOT ITTF travel resources available, please contact Agnes Fleming at 715-558-7750
agnes.fleming@lco-nsn.gov

MENOMINEE CASINO RESORT HOTEL BLOCK: 1-800-343-7778 Code "ITTF"

Please visit WisDOT ITTF at <http://wisdottribaltaskforce.org/> ;
<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/localgov/aid/Tribalaffairs/i-taskforce.htm>



On January 21, 2015, the WisDOT Inter-Tribal Task Force (ITTF) held a Tribal Transit Peer Exchange at the Menominee Tribal Convention Center. This event was attended by twelve (12) Wisconsin Tribal Representatives, five (5) WisDOT representatives and two (2) ITTF staff members.

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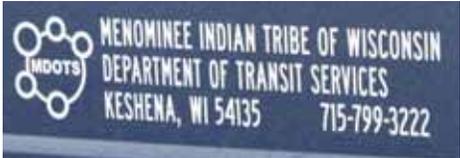
The day began with a brief overview of the WisDOT ITTF Transit goals and objectives followed by a power point presentation from Steve Hirshfeld and Katherine Patterson from the WisDOT. They did a fantastic job of outlining funding available from Federal and State programs. They presented the eligibility requirements, types of projects funded and the distribution of funds for rural public transit, Tribal transit, RTAP, Tribal transportation for elders, and rural public transit. Participants benefited from having immediate response to questions that were asked throughout the presentation

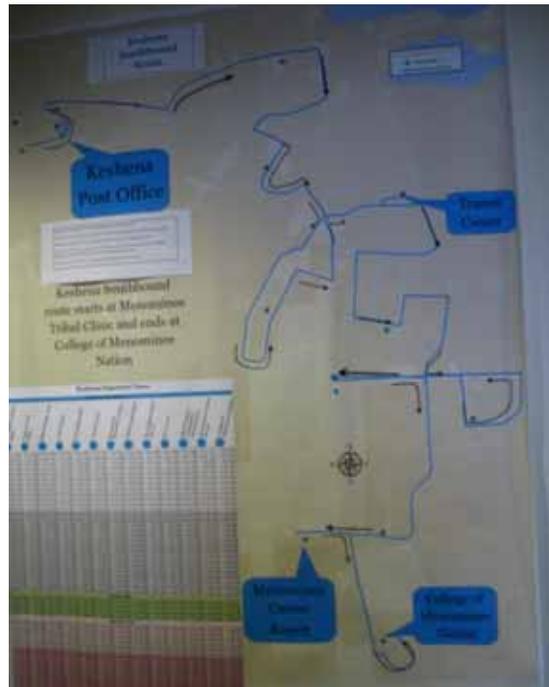


The Menominee Regional Public Transit personnel provided a presentation on their transit operation. The WisDOT ITTF extends a special thank you to Richard Ducane, Transportation Coordinator, and Neil Elgin, Senior Programmer, for an excellent job in describing and sharing their transit operations. They presented information on their transportation routes, hours of operation, fares, scheduling of rides, training, and day to day operations. Menominee created their own software program which tracked the maintenance of all their vehicles. Some participants were surprised to learn that they have their own in house software system for all their transit needs.

Menominee concluded their presentation by providing an on-site tour of their transit facility and operations. Their facility also incorporated energy efficient solar panel. They also have an office for the Wisconsin Department of Motor Vehicle, which is staffed on certain days throughout the week for community service.







After lunch, we held a round table discussion. Each tribe described their current operation and challenges they were facing. Some participants stated they were just beginning to plan a transit operation. Most participants expressed the need for public transportation for community members to go to work, school, medical appointments or needed transportation to socialize or conduct day to day business like shopping. The majority expressed a need for funding to support a transportation system. Some Tribal Communities needed assistance with infrastructure, such as website development or software to assist in scheduling and collection of data needed to complete regular reports for state and federal governmental agencies.

Angelica Salgado from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Region 5, Tribal Liaison, gave a PowerPoint presentation remotely via teleconference. She reviewed the FTA funding opportunity under Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Program, and the Tribal Transit Program and eligibility requirements that were due February 18, 2015. There was a question and answer period provided after her presentation, and I also collected written questions and forwarded them to her for her to respond. I emailed the questions to Angelica on January 28, 2015, a response was received on February 11, 2015, and then forwarded to all participants on February 12, 2015.

FTA questions and answers are as follows:

1. Danielle Fatla from Forest County Potawatomi Community:

Tier 3 – 25% Public Transportation on Tribal Lands as identified by census greater than 1,000 low-income individuals reside.

Q. The census is incomplete on Tribal lands. Is there a medium we could use as a number or a way to change this from “Tribal lands” to “Service area”? Or is there a process for appealing the census data?

RESPONSE: Based on the statutory language in MAP-21, Tribal Transit Program (TTP) funds are apportioned directly to Indian tribes using a three-tier- formula. Tier 3 is based on 2010 U.S. Census data, there is no appeal process at FTA

2. Jeff Benton from the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa:

Regarding the tier 3 formula funding criterion:

Q. Does the “on Tribal land” provision pertain to ALL of a tribe’s lands nationwide?

RESPONSE: No, it pertains to Tribal lands.

- 3. Rusty Barber from the Lac Courte Oreilles (LCO) Band of Lake Superior Chippewa:**
We are receiving tier 1 and tier 3 funding. As a weekend transit provider, we accumulate about 30,000 miles a year, however, as partner with a county transit, the LCO Tribe supplements about \$160,000 per year to its operating expense. We're not eligible for tier 2 because of lack of miles (200,000). As a partner, we do accumulate over 400,000 miles.

Q. Why can't the tribe be eligible using this partnership to meet tier 2?

RESPONSE: FTA will count a pro-rated share of the operator's VRMS towards the TTP apportionment, based on the portion of the total operating expenses provided by the Indian tribe. This share then would count towards both the Rural and TTP formulas.

- 4. Agnes Fleming from Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa:**

Q. Are the Tribal Chairs/Presidents going to be officially notified of the "mandatory" assessment visits?

RESPONSE: Yes, they will be receiving a letter from FTA explaining the process.

- 5. Confirmation needed on the dates and times of the upcoming workshops and technical assessment sessions FTA will be holding. The power point only lists the dates and location, and doesn't have any information for the third session being offered.**

RESPONSE:

- South West Transit Association Conference, March 1-4, 2015, Santa Fe New Mexico http://www.swta.org/news_events/details/swta-mnpta-joint-expo
- April – Denver and Sacramento still to be determined

- 6. Attendees requested a direct link to sign up for alerts and funding announcement if available.**

RESPONSE: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/usdotfta/subscribe/new>

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS

MENOMINEE:

- 138 employees with 80 vehicles
- An operating budget of about 4 to 5 million dollars
- Fixed routes and demand services
- They are allowed to go statewide and have partnerships agreements with the casino, clinic, Langlade County and Lac du Flambeau Tribe
- Hours of operation are six days a week. Monday through Thursday 5 am to 11 pm, Friday and Saturday 5 am to 2:30 pm. Closed on Sunday and open all holidays except for Christmas.
- Use Wiscom statewide 2 way radios in the vehicles
- Limited to 248 hours of demand response a week
- Part time employees are 30 hours or less due to changes in Obama Care
- They were a door to door service and a call-in system, now they use a metro system. They still pick up Elder and Disabled at their houses and help them into the vehicles
- Drug testing for drivers through HR
- All drivers attend the required trainings. All drivers need to have a CDL. CDL trainer is onsite.

SOKAOGON:

- Funded by WisDOT, IHS funds, and Tribal general operating funds
- Serves elders, disabled, veterans and low income families with no vehicles
- 42 Elders utilize transportation while 85 utilize medical, 9 with disabilities for a total of 250 members
- Need to emphasize college/educational transportation
- Would like to expand and provide public transportation with established routes

LAC COURTE OREILLES (LCO):

- Namekagon Transit is a partnership between the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe and Sawyer County. It operates under the guidance of the Transit Commission comprised of three representatives from LCO and three representatives from the Sawyer County Board.
- Provides transportation services to the residents of the LCO reservation, Sawyer County, Washburn County, and Barron County.
- Hours of operation are seven days a week from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm.
- Providing transportation for employees who work outside of our operating hours remains to be a challenge
- Elder transportation is provided through our Elder Programs and through our IHS clinic
- Need to improve our dispatching capability. Currently have the SHAW software that doesn't provide all of the data needed for reporting

- Website needs to be upgraded but without technical or monetary support it's going to remain an unmet need
- Everyone needs drivers and training. CDL classes are offered but we need more train the trainers so we can link together to provide services to all state wide transit operations

BAD RIVER PUBLIC TRANSIT:

- Have 4 vehicles, 9 drivers, 6 are full time and 3 are part time
- Use Google earth to track drivers
- Have a fixed route that just runs on Highway 2.
- Operating hours are Monday through Friday on the reservation, evenings and weekends runs into the city of Ashland
- Would like to expand, have driveway pick-up, help women and kids with shopping, would like more training for the drivers, would like a way to schedule more easily
- Funded by 5311 and 85.20 funding, BIA, and \$50,000 from Tribal funds. Bills are paid through city office
- Website needs updating and improvements
- Ridership is 43 to 46K a year
- Medical transportation provided by clinic

RED CLIFF:

- Transit program has 5311 annual formula discretionary grant, BIA grant and 85.20 grant, \$120,000 a year for operating
- Have one 12 passenger bus, 1 full time employee and 1 part time employee
- Elder and medical transportation are paid out of 85.21 and 85.215 funds
- Hours of operation are 6 days a week from 7am to 7pm
- Dispatch and software through Bad River and use Google maps to track buses
- Serve on and off reservation with Bayfield for approximately a 15 to 20 mile radius
- At peak hours our bus can't keep up
- Would like to expand operation

STOCKBRIDGE-MUNSEE:

- Have Elderly programs and state funds
- Applying to FTA for funding to conduct a feasibility
- Transportation to and from schools is one of our issues
- Interested in training and funding

Conclusion

Overall the Transit Peer Exchange was a great step towards improving transit transportation for the Wisconsin Tribes and improving communications and partnerships between the Wisconsin Tribes, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and other state and federal programs. Some Tribes expressed the need for additional technical support for grant writing and website development. The tribes are in varying stages in their transit operations. Based upon the comments and feedback received the following are the next steps to be considered in developing programmatic goals and objectives.

Next Steps:

1. Develop a transit implementation work plan for the WisDOT Inter-Tribal Task Force Annual Work Plan.
2. Explore resources within the ITTF budget to provide technical support to Tribes of transit programming.
3. Explore the possibility of WisDOT, FHWA, FTA providing technical support in grant writing.
4. Add transit information to the ITTF website so that it can be used as a centralized location for transit peer information, funding, resource links and points of contact for technical assistance, links to all other Tribal transit websites and key points of contacts, staff assistance, grant writing and map of all resources.
5. Explore training programs that will serve multiple Tribal transit programs in areas of operator/driver education, safety, train the trainer programs, etc. Adding a collective operator training program to the work plan.
6. Create a statewide Tribal transportation safety plan and include transit considerations.
7. Hold an Annual Transit Peer Exchange.
8. Provide a list of all available transit funding and other resources on the Transit webpage.
9. Add Links to all presentations to the ITTF website

Attendance List Attached

Program PowerPoint Presentations Attached