

TRANSIT EXPRESS

The Newsletter of the Wyoming Public Transit Association

2009 Wyoming Public Transit Association Award Nominations

Driver of the Year Nominees

Nominee: Roberta Kraft

Agency: Niobrara Senior Center

Nomination by Connie Baker, Director

Roberta (Bobbi) Kraft has been a driver for the Niobrara Senior Center for three years.

Bobbi is a very dependable responsible driver with an excellent attendance record. Each day she makes the passengers feel so happy and cheery, due to her warm compassionate personality. She's always happy and willing to do whatever she is asked to do. She goes above and beyond her job description by shoveling clients' walks, running errands, putting in light bulbs, tracking down garbage cans that have blown away, or whatever may be needed that day. Bobbi keeps good records for the vehicles, and ensures vehicles are maintained properly.

Bobbi is very caring and compassionate when helping all clients, but especially our disabled clients.

Bobbi has a very good record for safe driving.

The Niobrara Senior Center is very fortunate to have Roberta driving and taking care of our passengers. 🚗

Nominee: Dave Parrott

Agency: Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit (START)

Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Transit Operations Manager

Dave came to work for START a year and a half ago and in that time, he has become one of our most valued drivers. He is always on time and looks professional when he comes in to drive. He is polite and courteous and our riders think he is great. Dave really enjoys driving and it shows. He really pays attention to what is going on.

In addition to driving our fixed route buses, Dave also takes care of our ADA service on the weekends. Dave really excels in this role too. He had a career in sales working for a prosthetics manufacturer and has an extraordinary empathy for people with mobility challenges.

Dave also has helped out START by training to be a dispatcher/supervisor and he covers that role for us on Saturdays. Usually, first time supervisors have to struggle learning all of the responsibilities of being a dispatcher/supervisor but Dave took to the role easily and managed our operation every Saturday morning this past winter without a hitch. And finally, on top of everything else that Dave has done for START, he is also one of our "go to" guys. We can call him on short notice and he is always ready and willing to come in and drive. And when we have special events like the "Wyoming Association of Municipalities Conference" or the "International Pedigree Stage Stop Sled Dog Race", Dave volunteers to drive those special buses and always represents START professionally.

For all of these reasons, Dave Parrott is very deserving of the WYTRANS Driver of the Year Award. 🚗

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Dispatcher of the Year Nominees

Nominee: Teri Spillman

Agency: STAR Transit

Nomination by Judy Owens, Director

Fourteen years ago Teri Spillman was hired as a part-time driver for STAR Transit and did such an excellent job she was quickly promoted to the challenging position of full-time dispatcher. She has taken on the task with great ease and professionalism.

Teri understands every job at STAR Transit and is willing to cover for all positions without being asked, even if it means she will miss lunch or have to stay late. She understands that people have lives other than work and she works hard to adjust her schedule to help people when life happens.

Teri understands the needs of STAR Transit clients and she tries to help coach them in coordinating their rides with their needs. Everyone that has dispatched knows it is a challenge. Some clients have special needs and have a hard time understanding how the system works. Teri takes the time to understand their needs and works hard to accommodate them.

Teri also understands the business side of STAR Transit and is diligent at reviewing routes to ensure STAR Transit is running in the most cost efficient manner possible. Her hard work helps to keep STAR Transit within the budget restraints.

As a dispatcher and a catch all person, Teri is a key factor in creating an excellent work environment. Teri is the true meaning of a "Great Dispatcher" and deserves to be honored by receiving the WYTRANS "Dispatcher of the Year" award. 🚗



Nominee: Tom Guheen

Agency: Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit (START)

Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Transit Operations Manager

Tom Guheen has been the morning dispatcher for START since 2001. He has been the first person in the office for almost 8 years. That means he has to show up

in the bus yard before 5:00 a.m. That feat alone may not sound too impressive except Tom lives on the other side of Teton Pass in Idaho so he has to leave his home by 4:00 a.m. Teton Pass is over 8,000 feet and has a 10% grade. Many winter mornings he is ahead of the snow plow and has had to literally push snow with the front of his car to get over the pass. But Tom has never missed a day of work in eight years. Even when the pass is closed, Tom gets up two hours earlier and drives around through Swan Valley.

Tom knows how important it is to be here when the first drivers start to show up. He starts their buses, unchocks their wheels and makes their coffee, then checks all of the drivers out to make sure they are safe and ready to drive. He also checks in with the morning mechanics and makes sure they have buses in their bays and are busy working on equipment. And while he is doing all of this, he forwards the office phone to his cell phone so he can personally answer all of the morning office calls. Tom is truly amazing.

On top of all this, Tom also is a CPR and First Aid trainer for Red Cross. Not only does Tom conduct training for the transit drivers but he also instructs the public works crew on his own time as well. He also teaches PASS, Safe Driver and "Pump Up your Pre-Trip" classes. It would be hard to replace Tom. I think it would take three people to do so.

For all of these reasons, Tom Guheen deserves the WYTRANS 2009 Dispatcher of the Year award. 🚗

WYTRANS Agency of the Year Nominees

The WYTRANS Board of Directors asked the WYDOT Staff to submit nominees for WYTRANS Agency of the Year.

Nominee: Douglas Senior Citizens

Nomination by WYDOT Staff

The Douglas Senior Citizens have a polite and punctual staff. Ridership and billing information is always submitted on time and they are very thorough with their funding requests. They are always willing to submit ideas to our staff to see if they can stretch their

funding and are actively trying to pursue new sources for local funding. Progress has been made and is ongoing in trying to create a separate identity for their Transportation Program within their overall senior



program. They have looked into partnering with another entity to supply rides for dialysis and are constantly trying to expand service within their existing budget. FY 2008 saw an increase in ridership of 40.37% to a total of 38,287 with nearly 35.8% of the rides being given to Disabled/Wheelchair passengers. The Douglas Senior Citizens transportation program is going through some exciting changes and continues to improve service in their community of approximately 5,200 people. 🚗



Nominee: Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit (START)

Nomination by WYDOT Staff

START has a very courteous, efficient and conscientious staff. When asked for information from WYDOT regarding different operating subjects that arise, they go above and beyond supplying us the documentation that we request. Their monthly billing and ridership information is always received timely and

error free. Annual funding applications are always submitted to WYDOT with legitimate support for their requests. START is frequently asked to overmatch on projects and has been resourceful in raising money from various local sources to match our Federal and State money. This agency consistently leads the state in ridership and provided 855,219 reported rides in FY 2008 which was an increase of 25.46% over FY 2007. Upon review of FY 2009 reported figures, START has seen a 7.3% increase YTD over last year. START continues to expand service in the Teton County area and has a very clear vision of where they would like to be in the next five years. 🚗

Nominee: Ten Sleep Seniors

Nomination by WYDOT Staff

The Ten Sleep Seniors are always ready to answer our call for information when we are preparing materials about our various programs. The staff always meets our deadlines for budget requests and their billing and ridership information is among the first to arrive each month. During this past year, they also have taken on a 5309 Capital Facilities project to add a 2 stall garage to their building to house transit vehicles that is near completion. Requests for funding are always supported with appropriate documentation and they always have a request to match their current needs. Ridership for FY 2008 showed an increase of 33.48% to a reported ridership of 4,884 in a community of 304 residents. The Ten Sleep Seniors have been resourceful in finding local funds for their transit program and reporting a 6% increase in ridership YTD. 🚗



Agency of the Year Nominees Continued...

Nominee: Wind River Transportation Authority (WRTA)

Nomination by Sean Solan, Transportation Manager

I take great pride in submitting WRTA for 'WYTRANS Agency of the Year' for 2009.

WRTA Bus Lines has seen an increase of 13% in ridership. Our growth and commitment to Fremont County at large, however, there are situations which set us apart from the 'norm' when dealing with rural transportation. We continually respond for special transit for patrons who must go to Lander or Ft. Washakie for medical or therapy. We are consistently seeing more passengers with special needs, non-ambulatory passengers.



WRTA transports special groups to activities which normally they would not be able to attend. We have extended our services to youth, church and college groups. We increased our contracts for service to include Fremont County Sheriff's Office, Wyoming Catholic College. We have kept our fares the same, in spite of the fact, gasoline and insurance has grown exponentially.

WRTA Bus Lines, in conjunction with Senior Centers of Lander and Dubois and Riverton, to develop a Coordinated Transit Study.

WRTA is a team player in the coordination of efforts for all of Wyoming and not simply for Fremont County.

WRTA is a first responder for 'Local Emergency Planning Committee' for evacuations.

I submit this organization for the recognition they deserve. All of our employees truly strive for excellence everyday. 🚗

Trainer of the Year Nominees

Nominee: Jim Forrest

Agency: STAR Transit

Nomination by Judy Owens, Director

Jim Forrest has worked for STAR since June 15, 1998 as a part-time driver. After nine years of driving he volunteered to become a PASS and Safe Driver trainer. He has been instrumental in maintaining the training program for STAR.

Jim is a wonderful trainer and his training sessions are always a joy to attend. He works hard to ensure the participants understand how important this training is. The participants walk away from his training enthused and confident with their abilities to handle all types of issues they may encounter on the bus.

Jim is very dedicated to transit and goes the extra mile. When he is asked to conduct a class he is always willing to provide the training; whether the training is in Rock Springs or wherever the training is needed. He enjoys visiting with people and helping them become confident with passenger safety and securement. 🚗

Nominee: Gregg Witzgall

Agency: Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit (START)

Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Transit Operations Manager

Gregg Witzgall has worked for START for over five years now and he became a WYTRANS Trainer two years ago. Gregg enjoys training and brings a lot of enthusiasm to his classes. And that is a good thing because we train a lot of drivers. Trying to get 50 drivers trained in PASS and Safe Driver before the winter season starts is an extremely daunting task. He has to work with a lot of different schedules and stay on top of the returning drivers by making sure that they get in to class if they are due for recertification. Gregg takes care of all of the details to make this happen and that takes a huge load off of me.

In addition to being a WYTRANS Trainer, Gregg also became certified to be a WYDOT Third Party Tester and now he helps people get their CDL's before he trains them on PASS and Safe Driver. So Gregg is a

busy guy in the fall just before our busy season starts. This year, Gregg helped 15 new drivers get their CDL's including 6 Australians and 4 East Europeans.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about all of this is that Gregg is an avid sportsman and takes all of his vacation time during hunting season so it was just amazing to see him juggle the training demands with his hunting season and manage to fit it all in.

Many of you have met Gregg at WYTRANS events before and I hope you will all agree that he is very deserving of the WYTRANS 2009 Trainer of the Year Award. 🚗

Outstanding Service Award Nominee

Nominee: Mary Seppie

Agency: STAR Transit

Nomination by Judy Owens, Director

It is my pleasure to nominate Mary Seppie for "The Outstanding Service Award." Mary has been with STAR Transit for nine years and has proven to be an exemplary employee. After having her first baby three months premature she decided to stay home and not continue to work for a prominent accounting firm in Rock Springs. In November 2000, she agreed to come to work for STAR Transit as a part-time Accountant and we are still thrilled.

Mary is a perfectionist and it shows in her work. She prepares all the reports that are sent to WYDOT for reimbursement and is very careful in making sure every "t" is crossed and "i" is dotted. Mary's first task after starting with STAR Transit was to get STAR Transit current with yearly audits. Mary put together the information for 3 years worth of audits and had STAR Transit caught up in the first year of her employment. STAR Transit has had clean audits every since.

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Mary has also taken on the challenge of providing CPR and First Aid training for STAR Transit. CPR refresher training is needed every year and Mary stays on top of the training and makes sure STAR Transit employees are in compliance. Training every year can become boring, however, she always makes the class fun and enjoyable.

Mary is also my sounding board. When there are problems at work she is helpful in giving a different point of view and helps with solutions.

STAR Transit is so lucky to have an employee like Mary. I am honored to work with her and to know her. 🚗

Transit Administrator of the Year Nominee

Nominee: Gail Roland

Agency: Niobrara Senior Center

Nomination by Connie Baker, Director

Gail Roland has been employed with the Niobrara Senior Center since 2002 as a driver and now as Transit Administrator.

Gail coordinates all out of town trips, drives bus in town when needed, supervises all maintenance of vehicles and garage, and manages the record keeping for the State programs.

Gail is a very conscientious employee who has to be encouraged to take her allowable days off. She is very organized in her office, in the vehicles, and in the garage.

Gail is a very safe driver and always helpful with the passengers.

The Niobrara Senior Center is very proud of our successful transportation program and gives much of the credit to Gail. 🚗

Editor's note:

This issue of the *Transit Express* includes edited nominations for the 2009 WYTRANS annual awards. Nominee information is in alphabetical order by the agency represented.

Directors of the transit agencies who are WYTRANS members will receive a ballot along with this newsletter. A representative from each agency may vote and return the ballot to WYTRANS *no later than 5 p.m. Friday, May 5, 2009*. Questions should be directed to Jaime Hunolt at WYTRANS, 307-679-3220.



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**2009 WYTRANS Conference and Bus Rodeo
Preliminary Schedule of Events**

Make plans now to attend the *21st Annual WYTRANS Conference and Bus Rodeo*, June 10-13, at the Riverton Holiday Inn. Training opportunities for drivers, managers, and dispatchers will be offered. CTAA PASS Training and WYTRANS Safe Driver Training will be held, as well as other topical workshops for drivers and managers.

The 2009 WYTRANS annual award winners will be announced at the banquet after the Bus Rodeo on Saturday, June 13. The banquet will begin at 3:30 p.m. at the Riverton Senior Center.

Wednesday, June 10, 2009

PASS - First day of class for beginning students
WYTRANS Trainers Meeting

Thursday, June 11, 2009

Beginning PASS Continued—Day Two
WYTRANS Safe Driver Course
PASS Recertification - *for those who have had the two-day class*
WYDOT Roundtable Discussion
WYTRANS Board Meeting—4:30 p.m.

Friday, June 12, 2009

Safety Security and Emergency Management
WYTRANS Safe Driver Course
PASS Recertification - *if needed*

Saturday, June 13, 2009

9 a.m. - Wheelchair Handling Workshop for Drivers
10:15 a.m. - 21st Annual WYTRANS Bus Rodeo
3:30 p.m. - Awards Banquet

A complete schedule will be in the May Newsletter.

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