

# TRANSIT EXPRESS

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## The Newsletter of the Wyoming Public Transit Association

### 2009 WYTRANS AWARDS

WYTRANS honored outstanding transit professionals June 13, 2009 at the annual awards ceremony, held in conjunction with the **21st Annual Conference and Bus Rodeo**. Awards for *WYTRANS Agency of the Year*, *Transit Administrator of the Year*, *Dispatcher of the Year*, *Driver of the Year*, *Trainer of the Year* and an *Outstanding Service Award* were selected by WYTRANS members. The 2009 winners are highlighted in this edition of *The Transit Express*.

#### 2009 WYTRANS Agency of the Year Ten Sleep Senior Center

*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 two 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 year to date. 🚗



*2009 WYTRANS Agency of the Year Award Winner Ten Sleep Senior Center. Director Sue Carey, not pictured.*

#### 2009 Driver of the Year—Roberta Kraft

*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.



*WYTRANS Driver of the Year Bobbi Kraft receiving award from WYTRANS Board President Sean Solan.*

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. 🚗

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## 2009 Dispatcher of the Year—Teri Spillman

*Nomination by Judy Owens, Director*

Fourteen years ago Teri Spillman was hired as a part-time driver for STAR Transit, in Sweetwater County, 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 the honor of being named the WYTRANS *Dispatcher of the Year*. 🚗



*Teri Spillman accepting WYTRANS Dispatcher of the Year award from Sean Solan, WYTRANS Board President.*

## 2009 Outstanding Service Award—Mary Seppie

*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 three 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.

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. 🚗



*Mary Seppie, receiving \$100 award and plaque for Outstanding Service*

**2009 Trainer of the Year—Gregg Witzgall**

*Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Former Transit Operations Manager*

Gregg Witzgall has worked for START Bus in Jackson 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. It was just amazing to see him juggle the training demands with his hunting season and manage to fit it all in. 🚗



*WYTRANS Trainer of the Year Gregg Witzgall receiving award from WYTRANS Board President Sean Solan.*

**2009 Transit Administrator of the Year—Gail Roland**

*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. 🚗

**A Special Thank You**

*WYTRANS honored a few key people who helped get an extra \$1.5 million in funding for transit in Wyoming, during this past legislative session.*



*Tim Summers, AARP Director, accepting award from Sean Solan, left*



*Jeri Bottenfield, Senior Friendship Center Director, accepting award from Sean Solan*



*Sean Solan, WRTA Director, accepting award from Marge Cole, WYTRANS Board Secretary*

**Attention WYTRANS Trainers:**

WYTRANS and CTAA are sponsoring a CTAA *Passenger Service and Safety (PASS)* Train the Trainer Certification Workshop, September 15-17, 2009 in Casper, Wyoming.

A WYTRANS *Safe Driver* Train the Trainer Certification Workshop will be held September 18, 2009 in Casper, Wyoming.

If you are a current WYTRANS trainer or looking to become a trainer, you need to register for these classes as soon as possible—class size is limited!

Contact WYTRANS with questions, (307)679-3220.

**2009 Conference Highlights**

The *21st Annual WYTRANS Conference and Bus Roadeo*, held June 10-13 at the Holiday Inn in Riverton, offered several workshop opportunities for drivers and managers.

Conference classes included CTAA’s *Passenger Service and Safety Certification (PASS)*, both beginning and recertification classes, and the WYTRANS *Safe Driver* course. The two-day PASS course covers driver sensitivity, as well as teaching drivers to be more in tune with passenger needs. The Safe Driver course was designed by WYTRANS trainers and is geared for the public transit driver.

Thursday morning **Emily Howery** of Community Entry Services taught a session on *Dealing with Stress*. Emily helped the group identify stressors in their lives and ways to manage these stressors.

Thursday afternoon the **WYDOT staff**—John Black, Taylor Rossetti and Joni Harlan—led a discussion on various issues facing transit providers across the state.

Friday morning **Gary Hegland** of the Small Urban and Rural Transit Center (SURTC) presented a course on *Safety, Security and Emergency Management*. This brief session was just one of the topics of the three-day *Principles of Transit Management* course developed by Gary and the staff at SURTC.

Friday afternoon **Captain Larry Prince** of the Riverton Police Department shared some information on dealing with violence and acts of terrorism on the bus.

Saturday morning the Central Wyoming College West Parking lot was the setting for the 21st Annual

WYTRANS Bus Roadeo. In addition to driving a tough course, contestants had to complete a 25-question test, parallel park a bus, load and secure a wheelchair passenger, and complete a pre-trip inspection. *Please see Page 5 for roadeo results.*

An Escort Competition was also held in conjunction with the roadeo. Teams of drivers paired off to load, secure, and unload a passenger. **Debra Lind** and **Rene’ Velis Merino** of START in Jackson won the competition and each received \$50. **Frenchie Frenzilli** and **Cliff Maloney** of the Cheyenne Transit Program placed second in the Driver/Escort Competition.

The day concluded with the annual awards ceremony at the Riverton Senior Center.

WYTRANS would like to thank everyone at WRTA for hosting this year’s conference and bus roadeo. Additional thanks to the WYTRANS Trainers, presenters, and those who attended the conference.

Finally, WYTRANS would like to thank all of the bus roadeo volunteers and judges. There was a good show of support from local and statewide volunteers at the WYTRANS Bus Roadeo. WYTRANS would like to thank these individuals as well as the organizations that sent drivers to compete in the bus roadeo. Special thanks also to the drivers who competed.

The WYTRANS Board of Directors has decided to take a year off from putting on a bus roadeo. The board will evaluate participant interest when scheduling the next WYTRANS Bus Roadeo. 🚍

**WYTRANS Board Meeting Highlights**

The WYTRANS Board of Directors held the summer meeting June 11 in Riverton, Wyoming. Several important issues were discussed during the meeting; a few of the items and important dates are highlighted below.

- WYTRANS Trainers will be developing a new training program for transit drivers in Wyoming. A final Train the trainer certification for CTAA PASS and WYTRANS Safe Driver will be held **September 15-18, 2009** in Casper
- WYTRANS, AARP and the Wyoming Association of Senior Project Directors will co-host a legislative reception **Monday, March 1, 2010** at the AARP offices in Cheyenne.
- Next year’s WYTRANS Conference will be in Casper, **June 23-25, 2010.**

*The official board minutes will not be approved until the next meeting scheduled for October 21, 2009 in Casper.*

## 2009 WYTRANS BUS ROADEO WINNERS

The *21st Annual WYTRANS Bus Roadeo* was held Saturday, June 13, at the Central Wyoming College West Parking lot in Riverton, Wyoming. Twelve contestants from transit and social service agencies around Wyoming competed for the first prize of \$1,000 and an all-expense paid trip to the 2010 CTA National Bus Roadeo in Long Beach, California.

**Carroll “Frenchie” Frenzilli** from Cheyenne Transit won the competition, scoring 579 points out of a possible 700.

**Rene’ Velis-Merino** from Southern Teton Area Rapid Transit (START) placed second with 578 points. **Brenda Miller** of Wind River Transportation Authority (WRTA) was third with 576 points. **Trish Harrison** from the Douglas Senior Center was fourth with 550 points. **Cloyd Hall** of Casper Area Transportation Coalition (CATC) placed fifth with 541 points.

WYTRANS would like to thank all of the judges and volunteers who helped make the day a success. The roadeo competition could not be done without many volunteers! 🚍



*Cheyenne Transit Driver Carroll “Frenchie” Frenzilli accepts the first place check from WYTRANS Board President Sean Solan at the Awards Banquet, June 13, in Riverton.*



*2009 WYTRANS Bus Roadeo contestants.*



*Rene’ Velis-Merino  
Second place*



*Brenda Miller  
Third place*



*Trish Harrison  
Fourth place*



*Cloyd Hall  
Fifth place*



*WYTRANS Bus  
Roadeo judges and  
volunteers working  
hard and enjoying the  
beautiful morning.*



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**A Big Thank You to all of the 2009 Conference donors!**

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*Crook County Senior Center*  
*Davey Coach Sales, Inc.*

*Emily Howery, Riverton*  
*Gloria Bulow, Riverton*  
*Lander Senior Center*  
*Riverton Senior Center*  
*WRTA—Wind River Transportation Authority*

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