

TRANSIT EXPRESS

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The Newsletter of the Wyoming Public Transit Association

2007 Wyoming Public Transit Association Award Nominations

Transit Administrator of the Year Nominee

Nominee: Michael Wackerly

Agency: START, Town of Jackson

Nomination by Steve Ainslie, Transit Operations Manager

I would like to nominate Michael Wackerly for "Transit Administrator of the Year". Michael is the Transit Administrator for Jackson's public transit system which is known as START. Michael has held this position for five years and during that time, he has accomplished many things. Michael found the money, through grants and other sources, to purchase thirteen buses at a cost of about \$3.5 million. This helped START build a new image and really become a successful transit system.

Michael's leadership and perseverance allowed us to set up commuter service to Teton Valley, Idaho. This was an extremely complicated process that was three years in the making. There were many hurdles that had to be overcome. Not only were we dealing with the State of Idaho and two municipalities in

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Dispatcher of the Year Nominee

Nominee: Dennis Zoller

Agency: Riverton Public Transportation

Nomination by Linda Burt, Riverton Senior Citizens Center

Dennis Zoller, Dispatcher/Supervisor for the Riverton Public Transportation Service (RPTS), has been with RPTS for seven years and has proven to be an outstanding team leader. His "can do" attitude makes a positive impact on the whole transportation team. Dennis not only provides service as the supervisor and dispatcher, he drives the vehicles, works on the vehicles, keeps the bus garage in great shape, and is a team player that anyone would want on his/her team. Dennis' positive attitude inspires all his team, and his enthusiasm is very contagious. Dennis is very conscientious about his work in all areas including his paperwork. The riders enjoy Dennis and his great sense of humor and caring attitude. He is kind to everyone he meets and will go the "extra mile" to help where he can. We are proud to nominate Dennis Zoller, Dispatcher of the year for 2007. 🚌

Editor's note:

This issue of the Transit Express includes edited nominations for the 2007 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. Wednesday, August 22, 2007. Contact Jaime Hunolt at WYTRANS with questions, 307-679-3220.

Transit Administrator Continued...

Idaho, we were also dealing with a completely different FTA jurisdiction. Our municipality had supporters and detractors of this service; so it was a real challenging ordeal to get it to all come together. But, service over Teton Pass started on April 16th and is running smoothly. The service has a very passionate and dedicated group of riders.

Michael has also been working to find the funding for a permanent home for START in Jackson. There is very little land in Jackson that is suitable for a bus barn and the cost for that land is absolutely astronomical. But, that is not stopping Michael. START cannot grow until a permanent and adequately sized home is found, so this funding has to be found. Failure is not an option! This is a task that would easily overwhelm most people. But Michael continues to work towards that goal. He is tireless in this regard.

All of the above things are good for START the organization. But Michael has also been good for the START staff in general and me in particular. Michael has a great sense of humor and always lends a sympathetic ear when I need someone to vent to. He helps me out when he sees I am swamped and provides encouragement. He is patient and understanding and provides friendly reminders of project due dates. For all of these things, Michael is an outstanding Administrator and worthy of the WYTRANS "Transit Administrator of the Year" award. 🚌

Driver of the Year Nominees

Nominee: John Fernandez

Agency: Meeteetse Recreation District

Nomination by Rita Farmer, Director Meeteetse Senior Citizens

On behalf of the Meeteetse Senior Center, I would like to nominate Mr. John Fernandez, Director of the Meeteetse Recreation District, as a candidate for

the "Driver of the Year" award. John pilots the Recreation District van to Cody, Wyoming each and every week to ensure that Meeteetse's senior population has an opportunity to see their physicians, get medications, and groceries. He then takes them to their favorite restaurant to have lunch. Without this service many, if not all, would have to seek this type of individual care elsewhere. That could become a financial burden to a majority, not to mention the feelings they may harbor about being a nuisance or bother to someone else.

John makes sure that everyone has been taken care of and delivers them back home safe, happy, and emotionally secure in the knowledge that he will be there for them next week, and the week after that. He is always more than a shuttle drive; he has developed a true friendship with all involved.

It is with pride and admiration that I make this nomination. 🚌



Nominee: Rene Velis-Merino

Agency: START Bus, Town of Jackson

Nomination by Johnny Ziem, Supervisor

Leaving your home is hard. Leaving your home as a political refugee from a war-torn country is even trickier. The idea of starting new, in another country, understanding another language, in another culture requires many skills. As his supervisor, I can assure you that Rene Velis-Merino has them all. Coming through the ranks of our drivers Rene has proven reliable, trustworthy, capable in a crisis and quick on his feet. Now as a fulltime driver, we expect more from him as a driver: more flexibility, bigger grins as a person and more courage in a country unlike his own. Rene constantly exceeds our expectations and fulfills our needs and demands, always with a smile and awareness for the well-being of others.

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Bus Roadeo Escort Competition

WYTRANS will hold a Driver/Escort Competition at the 2007 Bus Roadeo, October 13, in Casper. The event requires the escort and driver to load and unload a passenger using the lift and to secure the passenger in the vehicle while being timed. All transit drivers and escorts are eligible to compete in the contest. First prize will be \$50 for each team member. 🚌

WYTRANS Agency of the Year Nominee

Nominee: Riverton Senior Citizens Center

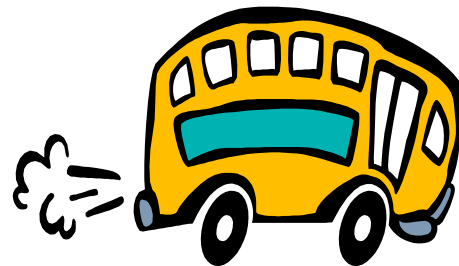
Nomination by Linda Burt, Director

The Riverton Senior Citizens Center offers as one of their many services the Public Transportation Service for Riverton (RPTS). The Riverton Senior Center continually promotes RPTS on their radio program, monthly newsletter, and flyers in the community. The Riverton Senior Center has expanded the services of RPTS to include nearby transportation challenged communities. The expanded weekly services are meeting the needs of Hudson, Kinnear, and Pavillion.

RPTS brings riders into Riverton to shop for groceries, go to medical appointments, beauty shop appointments, to the Senior Center, meet with friends, and other activities. This has helped to eliminate the isolation of living in a small community. Our other expanded service includes a "medi-bus" that takes people to dialysis treatment, cardiac rehab, and therapy in nearby Lander. The "medi-bus" and extended services have proven to be an excellent addition to our services that are offered seven days a week.

RPTS is very visible in the community and an asset to the community and keeping people active in the community. Riverton Senior Center offers many services, programs, and activities to our seniors and

community, focusing on health, community involvement, socialization, nutrition, transportation and others. The Riverton Senior Center coordinates services with businesses throughout the community. We participate in health fairs, winter fairs and other community projects and programs. For all the mentioned services, programs, and activities the Riverton Senior Citizens Center is being nominated for WYTRANS Agency of the year. 🚌



Driver of the Year Continued...

The Town of Jackson has a list of core values that test our notions of creativity, customer service and communication. For Rene this is not a test, just a basic means of working and living.

Now an American citizen, Rene not only is an asset to the Town of Jackson and the Start Bus, but benefits our community as well. This year Rene was elected "Driver of the Year" by his peers and received an award ("It is my job, it is our job.") at our annual Town Employee meeting. One would think that being a political refugee was arduous. One could think that being an indispensable employee and a perceptive driver was challenging. That is why the Start Bus nominates Rene: he makes it look easy. 🚌

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

2007 WYTRANS CONFERENCE AND BUS ROADEO PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Plan now to attend the 19th Annual WYTRANS Conference and Bus Rodeo, October 10-13, at the Casper Holiday Inn. The annual award winners will be announced at the BBQ after the Bus Rodeo on Saturday, October 13. The BBQ will begin at 3 p.m. at the Casper Senior Citizens Center.

Training Opportunities for drivers, managers and dispatchers will be offered. PASS Training and Save Driver Training will be held, as well as other topical workshops for drivers and managers.

Wednesday, October 10, 2007

PASS – First day of class for beginning students

WYTRANS Trainers Meeting – 5:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 11, 2007

Beginning PASS Continued – Day Two

WYTRANS Safe Driver Course

PASS Recertification – *for those who have had the 2-day course*

Drug and Alcohol Requirements Update

River Cities Public Transit

WYTRANS Board Meeting – 4:30 p.m.

Friday, October 12, 2007

Updating your local transportation Coordination Plan

Fire Evacuation Training

WYTRANS Safe Driver Course

PASS Recertification (if needed)

Dinner and Fun 6:00 p.m.

Saturday October 13, 2007

9 a.m. – Wheelchair Handling Workshop for Drivers

10:15 a.m. – 19th Annual WYTRANS Bus Rodeo

3 p.m. – Awards Banquet

A complete schedule will be in the August newsletter.

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