



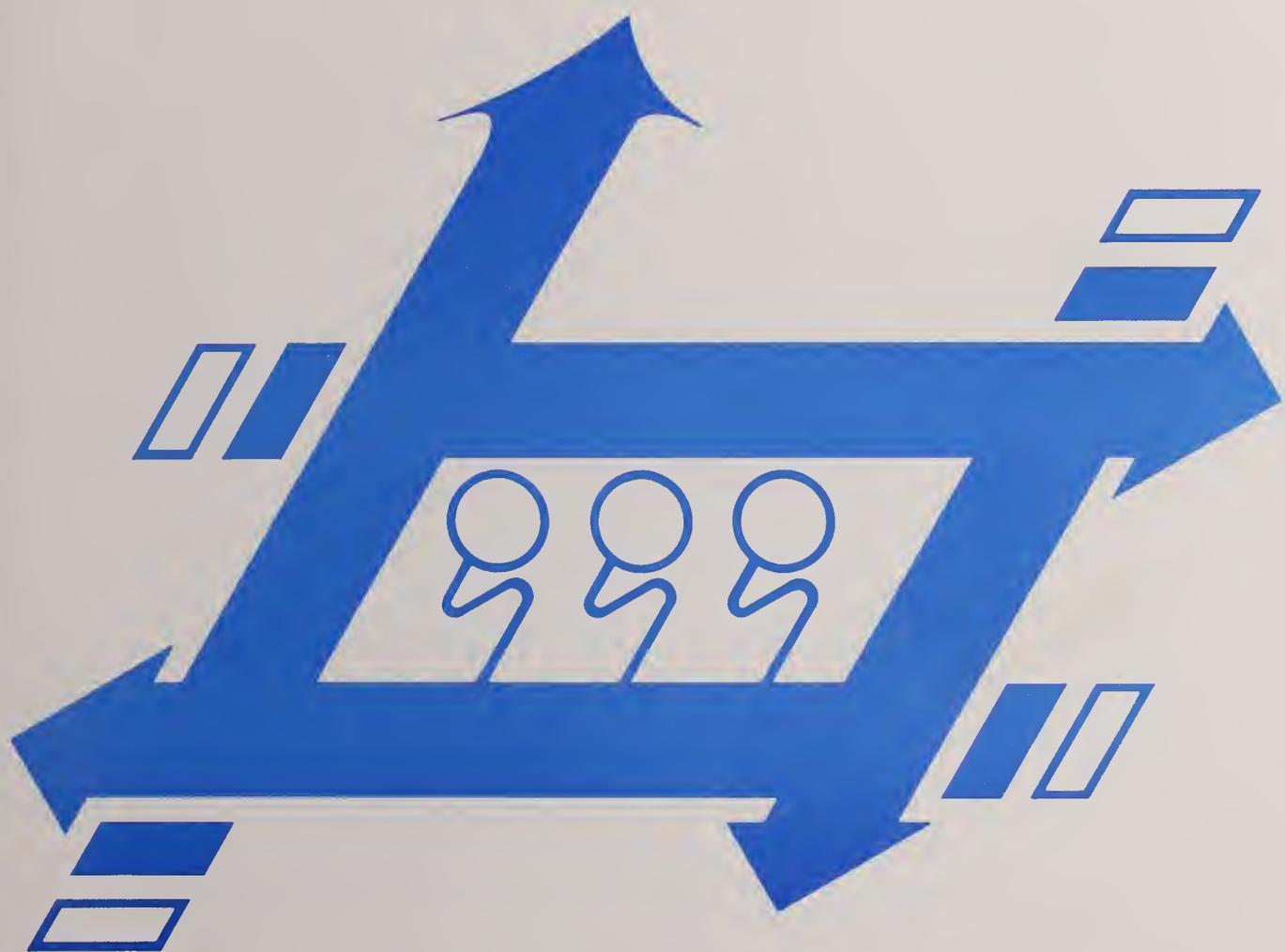
United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
Transportation



Reconnecting Rural America

Recommendations for a National Strategy



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**Reconnecting Rural America
Recommendations for
a National Strategy**

**Developed by
Participants at the
National Conference
on Reconnecting Rural America**

**Omaha, Nebraska
August 22-24, 1988**

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**“Reconnecting Rural America”
Participating Agencies and Organizations**

Airport Operators Council

American Association of Retired Persons

American Farm Bureau Federation

American Public Works Association

National Association for Transportation Alternatives

National Association of Regional Councils

National Conference of State Legislatures

National School Transportation Association

North Central Regional Center for Rural Development

Office of Congresswoman Virginia Smith

Office of Senator Larry Pressler

Public Private Transportation Network

Rural America / Center for Community Transportation

Transportation Research Board—Committee on Intercity Bus Transportation

United Bus Owners of America

U.S. Department of Agriculture—Extension Service

U.S. Department of Agriculture—Office of Transportation

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Office of the Deputy Under
Secretary

U.S. Department of Transportation—Office of the Secretary

U.S. Department of Transportation—Urban Mass Transportation Administration

Reconnecting Rural America Recommendations for a National Strategy Executive Summary

Transportation in rural America is at a critical juncture. Significant changes in population and economic base have occurred. And substantial loss of air, rail, and intercity bus services during the past decade has left many rural communities with limited access to any form of public transportation.

Concern for the loss of rural passenger transportation options led to the Reconnecting Rural America initiative, a cooperative effort directed by the United Bus Owners of America (UBOA), the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Transportation (USDA-OT). UBOA focuses on private operators, UMTA's charge is passenger transportation, and USDA-OT's mission is to meet the transportation needs of rural America. In conjunction with a National Planning Committee, these organizations held three regional symposia to gather information on rural passenger transportation needs and how they are being met throughout the country.

A National Conference held in Omaha, NE, during August 1988, represented the culmination of a joint, 18-month effort of a wide range of participating organizations to address the mobility needs of rural America. After a review of changing rural structural trends and the transition occurring in the transportation industry, the Conference focused on the nine components of a national strategy which emerged from the regional symposia. To examine service realities facing rural areas, the Conference included a discussion of an isolated rural area in danger of losing its intercity bus service.

Discussion culminated in the development of Recommendations for a National Strategy on Reconnecting Rural America. Conferees linked each of the following nine components to a specific set of actions, actors, and timeframes:

Components of a National Strategy to Reconnect Rural America

1. Foster public-private cooperation.
2. Mobilize support for rural passenger transportation.
3. Encourage community participation.
4. Define and coordinate complementary government roles.
5. Link rural transportation services into a transportation system.
6. Encourage market research and development.
7. Encourage diversification of funding sources.
8. Maximize flexible management of rural transportation.
9. Identify and eliminate regulatory barriers to cooperation.

Summary descriptions and recommended actions for each of the components follow.

Foster Public-Private Cooperation

Cooperation between the public and private sectors at the local, State, regional, and national levels is essential if rural passenger transportation is to meet the

mobility needs of rural residents. New approaches to public-private, private-private, and public-public cooperation must be found to permit rural people greater mobility.

Actions:

- Involve all levels of government in the transportation planning process
- Develop uniform State inventories of providers
- Involve local businesses and communities in the transportation planning process
- Involve national associations in the development and implementation of a national rural transportation strategy which includes the public and private sectors
- Coordinate the transportation services provided by all modes and carriers
- Encourage the development of intermodal linkages
- Develop local transit centers
- Explore and document how transit encourages economic/community development

Mobilize Support for Rural Passenger Transportation

Since nobody speaks for the rural passenger, all those involved in rural passenger transportation—users, public agencies, public and private providers, trade associations, economic development groups, the business community, and rural associations—should be identified and mobilized at national, State, and local levels so that a broad-based working coalition can be developed.

Actions:

- Develop a national plan for rural communities to maintain and expand passenger transportation services
- Develop a broad-based national coalition of organizations which can identify constituents and establish priorities for legislative actions
- Develop a State plan and coalitions to identify constituents; establish priorities; generate support of Governor's office, State legislators, agencies, organizations, and citizens; and establish a transportation clearinghouse
- Build local capacity to plan and implement transportation systems through coalition building and organizational development
- Create public awareness of rural passenger transportation needs at the State and local levels

Encourage Community Participation

Communities are an essential source of financial and volunteer support for rural passenger transportation providers. Effective community participation can generate support for continued intercity bus service and provide financial and volunteer support for rural public providers.

Actions:

- Develop local transit leaders by identifying, educating, and training local “movers and shakers,” and by creating a local transportation committee to initiate ongoing local transportation activities
- Provide information to the public on transportation service by using public service announcements, holding parades, conducting equipment demonstrations, distributing service brochures, and using joint advertising
- Advocate and sustain service for rural areas by collecting data on local service needs, creating public awareness programs, identifying economic benefits of service, and bringing together local interest groups
- Match transportation service with needs by talking to providers, identifying potential service providers and types of services, and coordinating public/private riders
- Facilitate the creation of a local transportation center by seeking transportation linkages, tying the center to local businesses, identifying potential sites, and making the center a visible, vested part of the community

Define and Coordinate Complementary Government Roles

The transportation roles of Federal, State, and local governments are evolving during a period of transition. The Federal Government, now responsible for developing national policy, is moving toward the role of facilitator and provider of technical assistance. State governments are shaping an environment that supports rural passenger transportation efforts, while local governments are developing transportation service to meet local demands.

Federal Actions:

- Rename UMTA as Public Transportation Agency to serve as facilitator for providers and users of rural transportation
- Coordinate development of a comprehensive national transportation policy to ensure rural mobility
- Modify existing passenger programs and move toward a block grant concept
- Coordinate implementation of a national strategy that includes all modes
- Create consensus about government roles in transportation through communication, public forums, and public awareness programs
- Provide technical assistance

State Actions:

- Create a positive environment for rural transportation
- Develop State strategies that foster coordination
- Develop regional systems beyond the scope of counties or other local jurisdictions
- Represent State issues in national forums
- Provide funding and technical assistance
- Create consensus about government roles in transportation

Local Actions:

- Develop and implement responsive local systems
- Develop local funding priorities given available funds
- Create consensus about government roles in transportation

Link Rural Transportation Services Into a Transportation System

While transportation services are available in rural America, many times they cannot be used effectively because they are not linked into a transportation system. Linking services can expand transportation options for rural residents without increasing costs.

Actions:

- Develop policies and programs that encourage the development of a transportation system which combines services and vehicles at the national, State, and local levels
- Develop centers to facilitate linking of transportation services
- Broaden intermodal communication and information mechanisms about available services
- Promote interline ticketing which includes passengers, baggage, and packages

Encourage Market Research and Development

Information and marketing are two gaps that limit an improved rural passenger transportation system. Demographic data is lacking to define the market, and information on current rural transportation service is not easily available to the public. While marketing is key to any successful service, limited resources have prevented providers from targeting publicity efforts. An effective market research and development strategy is needed to expand rural transportation services.

Actions:

- Distribute widely information now available on transportation, including "Reconnecting Rural America" materials

- Continue and improve basic data collection for both public and private data sources
- Update State bus studies to reflect deregulation and identify rural connection opportunities
- Monitor and evaluate rural intercity linkages
- Develop local marketing assistance to encourage ridership
- Use marketing techniques to reach State and local decisionmakers
- Expand transportation user information base by including rural operators, linking modes, using printed and electronic media, and utilizing travel agencies

**Encourage
Diversification of
Funding Sources**

Because rural passenger needs are diverse, rural passenger transportation cannot rely on a single source of funding. Funding needs to be a joint Federal, State, and local government effort in conjunction with private industry. Utilizing a broad range of funding sources and allowing greater flexibility in mixing available funding can provide mobility to more rural residents.

Actions:

- Provide parity in distribution of transportation funding among modes and demographic groups
- Allow greater flexibility in mixing funding sources
- Allow greater diversity in matching funds
- Leverage private sector contributions
- Increase funding for major related transit programs
- Create finance mechanisms to facilitate the effective initiation, implementation, and operation of rural transportation services
- Fund research, market development, and innovations
- Change laws, policies, and administrative guidelines that constrain best use of funding
- Change laws that limit funding to one agency to permit more mixing and consolidation of funding

**Maximize Flexible
Management of Rural
Transportation**

As resources available for rural passenger transportation have tightened, flexible approaches to managing become more critical. The rural operator must maximize internal managerial flexibility, while the rural community needs to consider all available resources to assure mobility for rural residents. Resource management

for rural transportation today thus focuses on the community within which the service is provided as well as on the system which transports rural residents.

Actions:

- Implement a resource management plan as part of the national strategy
- Identify and activate an existing national resource center to provide assistance to communities and rural transportation providers to identify assistance, maximize resources, and overcome barriers
- Develop a national educational package for wide distribution to States, providers, businesses, decisionmakers, and their national associations to assist in planning, identifying resources, determining needs, and developing cooperative arrangements among providers
- Conduct educational programs for transportation providers and users, local decisionmakers, and national associations representing rural decisionmakers

**Identify and Eliminate
Regulatory Barriers to
Cooperation**

Restrictive laws, regulations and rules, both actual and perceived, impede efficient utilization of transportation resources. Such barriers at the Federal, State, and local levels must be addressed to permit more effective use of available funding sources.

Actions:

- Identify restrictive measures at Federal, State, and local levels, and develop ways to overcome them
- Review existing Federal and State rules and regulations that prohibit coordination, and develop strategies to propose changes where appropriate
- Encourage human service agencies to share existing transportation resources and provide for shared riding
- Develop policies that encourage cross-matching of funds and other resources through legislation, executive orders, administrative guidelines, and management plans

BACKGROUND

Transportation in rural America is at a critical juncture. Significant changes in its population and economic base have occurred. And substantial loss of air, rail, and intercity bus services during the past decade has left many rural communities with limited access to any form of public transportation.

During 1987, an effort began to "reconnect rural America." The United Bus Owners of America (UBOA), the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Transportation (USDA-OT) have directed the initiative in conjunction with a National Rural Transportation Planning Committee, a broad-based group of agencies and organizations concerned about rural passenger transportation.

Three regional symposia were held during 1987-88 to identify the issues and develop solutions to meet rural mobility needs. The process involved rural transportation providers and users throughout the country. The North Central Symposium took place in Des Moines, IA, in December 1987, and served as the pilot for two additional symposia. The Eastern Symposium was held in Annapolis, MD, in April 1988; and the Western Symposium took place in San Francisco, CA, in May 1988.

The symposia process was designed to gather grassroots input on rural passenger transportation needs and how those needs are being met in different parts of the country. Beyond gathering information, the process itself encouraged the exchange of ideas and experiences and the development of consensus regarding the needs, constraints, and strategies for rural passenger transportation.

The symposia process encouraged the participation of a broad range of agencies and organizations concerned about rural intercity passenger transportation. The planning process for each regional symposium brought together those individuals considered to be rural transportation leaders within their region. The symposia in turn included a wide variety of organizations concerned about rural passenger transportation, presented them with information on rural areas and recent changes in the passenger transportation industry, and engaged them in workshop discussions about the difficulties facing transportation in rural areas. Throughout the symposia process, participants anticipated the use of their insights and information in developing a national strategy for rural passenger transportation. That awareness fostered a keen sense of the need to cooperate with those working in rural transportation to formulate a consensus approach to meeting rural mobility needs. Through the workshop process, participants identified nine basic components critical to the provision of rural passenger transportation.

Information gathered at the regional symposia as summarized in "Reconnecting Rural America: Report on Rural Intercity Passenger Transportation" and "Annotated Bibliography on Rural Intercity Passenger Transportation" formed the basis for the National Conference on Reconnecting Rural America held in Omaha, NE, on August 22-24, 1988. The Conference brought together leaders of public and private agencies and organizations concerned about the mobility needs of

rural Americans. Continuing the process begun during the regional symposia, participants used the nine identified components to generate recommended actions, actors, and timeframes for a National Strategy on Reconnecting Rural America.

Meeting in workshops, participants addressed “what” needs to be done, and each workshop then identified recommended actions for each component. Followup workshops concentrated on “who” should take the recommended actions and “when” such actions should be taken. “Recommendations for a National Strategy on Reconnecting Rural America” was then developed based upon the process begun at the regional level.

The document was sent to all Conference participants, the National Planning Committee, and all those who attended the regional symposia. Participants were asked to review the report, respond to the recommended organizational roles, and indicate their level of interest and commitment in implementing the National Strategy.

This report summarizes the National Conference, presents the output of the workshops, and incorporates organizational response to the workshop recommendations. While the document represents Conference output, it does not necessarily reflect official policy positions of any of the participating agencies and organizations. It is offered as a working document that can be used for policy development and program planning for rural passenger transportation at the national, State, and local levels.

HIGHLIGHTS OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE

This section presents key points given by speakers in order of appearance at the National Conference on Reconnecting Rural America held in Omaha, NE, on August 22-24, 1988. The information is presented to set the context and provide background materials useful in evaluating the recommendations for the National Strategy. Key issues include changing rural structural conditions, emerging trends in the passenger transportation industry, and the responses by rural passenger transportation providers and users throughout the country to the new transportation environment facing rural residents.

Introduction

Nebraska Congresswoman Virginia Smith opened the National Conference by stating: "You can't get there from here." For many rural Americans, this punch line to the classic joke giving advice to a lost tourist has become a fact of life. Rural America is going through major upheavals, some involving economic development and the revitalization of rural America and others relating to the quality of life for rural Americans. Rural mobility is one of the most serious problems affecting both economic development and quality of life. Congresswoman Smith outlined three concerns in setting the scene for Conference discussion of rural passenger transportation. First, rural America is changing, and second, in light of those changes, maintaining transportation opportunities is especially important. Lastly, where should rural America go from here—and how can this Conference begin to address that question?

Rural Structural Trends

Dr. J. Norman Reid, researcher with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service, outlined the structural trends taking place in rural America. Economic adjustment, population decline, modified government responsibilities, and fundamental changes in agriculture, manufacturing, and services underlie the changes taking place today in rural communities.

The 1980's have been a time of economic adjustment for rural areas. Rural employment growth has been half that of metropolitan areas, while rural unemployment rates have been higher than those in metropolitan areas. Rural income has declined during the 1980's. Rural population growth slowed dramatically in the 1980's, a reversal of the 1970's when the rural population grew more rapidly than urban population. Government responsibilities have also shifted, with the Federal Government reducing its role in directing and financing rural development. State governments in turn have taken on a larger financial role in assisting localities.

The rural economy today is quite diverse, but experiences during the 1980's also have been diverse within different types of rural communities. Most rural areas did poorly, although many are beginning to recover. Counties dependent on farming, manufacturing, or mining remained stable or experienced job losses. Two types of rural counties, retirement/recreation areas and places close to major urban centers, performed very well during the 1980's and are showing promise for future development.

The changes taking place in rural areas are not cyclical, but reflect a fundamental restructuring of the national economy, and with it, the rural economy. Natural resource-based industries are declining as a source of employment. Manufacturing has ended a period of decentralization which began in the late 1960's. Relative labor cost advantages no longer favor rural areas as industry moves overseas, while cities are beginning to appear more livable and attractive to industry. Some rural areas continue to suffer location disadvantages as transportation and communications improvements have not removed the distance factor. Labor force quality problems, including low education levels, health conditions, and an aging population, keep some rural areas from attracting industry.

Dr. Reid emphasized that predicting the future of rural America is difficult, but several trends appear likely. Some areas may do poorly, particularly those dependent upon resource-based economies such as agriculture, mining, and timber. Other areas have the potential to do well, especially those able to develop innovative industrial capacity. Such locations include places near research universities and with good transportation, areas near metropolitan centers, attractive living sites, and scenic areas.

Transportation Service Changes

Transportation is clearly vital to rural communities. Yet transportation is changing, both in response to rural structural trends and to deregulation. Michael Redisch, researcher with the Office of Transportation Analysis in the Interstate Commerce Commission, addressed the changes taking place within the industry. He provided a short review of government transportation policy as background necessary to understand events in transportation today.

Congress has long been concerned to tie rural communities into the economic mainstream, and saw transportation infrastructure as necessary for economic development. To respond to those concerns, Congress established the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) in 1887. Until 1935, the ICC regulated only the railroads, but in 1935 trucks and buses were included under ICC regulatory jurisdiction. By the late 1970's, a movement toward less regulation in transportation began to take shape. As a result, the airline industry was deregulated in 1978, with the Motor Carrier Act and the Staggers Act partially deregulating trucking and the railroads in 1980. In 1982, the Bus Regulatory Reform Act was passed to deregulate the bus industry. Each of the acts has affected its respective transportation industry, and each has affected transportation services now available to rural areas.

Railroads were the first to undergo partial deregulation in 1958. Between 1958 and 1970, the number of passenger trains dropped by 60 percent. By 1970, congressional concern for the shrinking intercity rail network led to the formation of Amtrak. Railroads were allowed to terminate their passenger operations by turning them over to Amtrak, a federally subsidized corporation. Amtrak today serves more than 500 communities throughout the Nation.

Airlines were next deregulated in 1978. From 1978 to 1983, total domestic airline traffic increased by 40 percent, with much of that increase taking place in major hub airports. Departures from airports serving large and medium cities rose by 20 percent or more, while departures in small communities increased by 4 percent. Flight patterns for small communities also changed as carriers adjusted both

schedules and equipment to passenger demand. Congressional concern for continued air service to rural communities led to the Essential Air Service Act, legislation which subsidizes service to approximately 150 small communities and isolated areas.

The Bus Regulatory Reform Act of 1982 deregulated the bus industry, but did not provide a subsidy similar to those established for passenger rail and the airlines. By 1986, the ICC estimated that between enactment of the Bus Act in 1982 and January 1986, a nationwide total of 4,514 pickup points had lost service. A majority of the service losses occurred in communities with populations of 10,000 or less.

As a result of long-term trends, including deregulation, transportation services are in transition as industry responds to changed market demand. Downsizing and experimenting with new resource management techniques are two such approaches in use today.

Transportation Policy

Carlton Robinson, executive vice-president of the Highway Users Federation, emphasized that passenger transportation is but one part of a transportation industry undergoing transition. As part of that transition, the Nation's surface transportation policy is undergoing a comprehensive review in preparation for the 21st century. The goal of completing the Interstate Highway System, the focus of national policy since its inception in 1956, is now largely accomplished, and a new national transportation policy needs to be in place in 1991.

That new policy must conform to the needs of a nation transformed by the Interstate Highway System. Highway use has tripled since 1956, with the Nation becoming more urbanized during the same period. Population growth has taken place in the suburbs, a pattern which has created much of the increase in traffic. Highway use is expected to double again during the next 30 years.

Robinson outlined several of the issues facing transportation as the Nation moves into the 21st century. A primary concern is the safety of the Nation's roadways: If safety does not improve from its current level, by the year 2000, 80,000 persons will die per year in traffic accidents. A second concern is financing. Although highway use has been increasing at 4 1/2 percent per year, capital spending has been declining since 1970. Capital spending per vehicle mile has also been declining, with \$41 per 1,000 vehicle miles spent in 1970 in contrast to \$12 per 1,000 vehicle miles in 1988.

To address these and other concerns in preparation for the surface transportation legislation of 1991, the American Association of State Highway Officials and the Highway Users Federation began a nationwide effort to gather information and generate consensus on national transportation policy. Titled "Transportation 2020," the initiative is taking place in four stages. The first phase, holding 65 State forums, has been completed, and the results are now being evaluated in phase 2. In stage 3, the results will be shared with Congress and the Administration, with the passage of legislation representing the final stage.

Rural involvement in the 2020 process is especially critical since funding priorities are being set for the next 30 years. As rural transportation needs change in conjunction with rural structural trends, the new surface transportation legislation

should balance rural needs with national resources, a process which requires the input of those involved in rural transportation.

In summarizing trends in transportation and rural America today, New York State Senator Charles Cook stated that traditional rural America has now largely converged into the national mainstream, and rural residents share common goals and many common attitudes with all Americans. Yet there is a difference. "The dispersion of geography and distance creates conditions in rural America that are different from those of urban areas. The systems and institutions we create in rural communities need to be designed to the scale of the numbers they serve; and must be mutually supportive of each other so that each strengthens the other. ... Our challenge is to break through isolation without destroying independence; to enhance the rural quality of life without destroying its freshness; and to develop public policy which recognizes rural America as a co-equal branch of the national mainstream which, while different, is equally important to any other in its needs, its aspirations, and its potential."

Cooperative Rural Transportation Effort

Concern for the loss of rural passenger transportation options led to the Reconnecting Rural America initiative. As described in the Introduction, the National Planning Committee cooperated in holding three regional symposia to gather information on rural passenger transportation needs and how they are being met throughout the country. The involvement of regional transportation leaders as regional planning committee members and speakers ensured the participation of a wide range of those concerned about rural mobility needs. The National Conference thus represented the culmination of a joint, 18-month effort of broadly based participating organizations to address the mobility needs of rural America. After a review of changing rural structural trends and the transition occurring in the transportation industry, the Conference focused on the results of the regional symposia, and included a discussion of the service realities facing an isolated rural area in danger of losing its intercity bus service.

To open discussion of the regional symposia output, Roland Vautour, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Small Community and Rural Development, described the importance of transportation to viable rural communities: "Linking our rural communities alleviates isolation, provides access to necessary jobs and services, supports important business activity, and facilitates transport of rural products." Since transportation problems facing rural communities cannot be divided along modal lines, political boundaries, or levels of government, the resources and talents available at all levels of government must be combined with those of the private sector. In many isolated rural areas, it is only through cooperation among all organizations working in rural transportation that effective transportation services can be forged.

Brien Benson, associate administrator of UMTA's Budget and Policy Unit, discussed how the symposia had begun to build consensus and momentum among a wide range of organizations to improve rural mobility. Focusing on the long-term secular changes occurring within rural areas and their transportation systems, he emphasized the need to tailor services to the local situation. As such, UMTA has been coordinating its rural passenger activities with both private operators and public bodies. Further efforts involve development of "best practices" for rural operators, identification of coordination opportunities, and resolution of insurance issues. These activities, in conjunction with the

reconnecting effort, can enhance rural mobility by using existing networks, including the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP), which links rural transportation providers throughout the country.

Results of the Regional Symposia

Harold Morgan, codirector of the Public Private Transportation Network, turned to the symposia workshop results by summarizing key findings. The North Central symposium, which took place in Des Moines, IA, focused on rural isolation. The Eastern Symposium in Annapolis, MD, on the other hand, was more optimistic, concentrating on efforts to connect rural local providers with intercity networks, the rural connector effort initiated by Greyhound Lines, Inc. The Western Symposium in San Francisco, CA, emphasized rural passenger transportation bellweather phenomena, with participants describing Amtrak connectors and multimodal operations.

Morgan continued the discussion of rural transportation goals formulated by symposia participants by noting that each symposium progressively formulated more complex goals. The North Central Symposium emphasized the need to understand transportation needs and mobilize public support. The Eastern Symposium developed specific methods to meet rural passenger needs, and focused on the key roles of marketing and coordination. The Western Symposium urged the development of a national policy/strategy addressing rural mobility needs.

Lowell Richards, administrative assistant of the Division of Planning in the South Dakota Department of Transportation, then examined the constraints facing rural passenger transportation as developed in the symposia workshops. He found that six categories summarized the constraints, and listed them in order of predominance:

1. The constituency for rural passenger transportation is unorganized, a situation which leads to general public apathy about rural passenger transportation concerns.
2. Rural transportation is characterized by high cost and low revenues, a condition discouraging adequate service in rural areas.
3. Bus rides do not have the status associated with air or rail transportation.
4. Competition for existing public funds for transportation leaves very little, if any, funds for rural intercity passenger transportation.
5. Competition among operators/providers further reduces transportation options for rural residents.
6. State and local statutes inhibit cooperation or coordination in providing rural passenger transportation services.

Herb Riley, transportation planner in the Policy and Planning Unit of the Oregon Department of Transportation, summarized the strategies outlined in the regional symposia. The strategies evolve through three stages, namely building consensus, building policy, and adding/improving services. Building consensus requires educating the public about rural passenger needs, an activity which will involve the general public, passengers, interest groups, carriers, and elected/appointed government officials. A task force would represent a formal group able to focus on rural mobility concerns, stimulate discussion, and start a national intermodal association. Building a national policy would involve defining roles, establishing a uniform description of needs, identifying markets, and formulating funding

priorities. The third stage would then consist of implementing the policy, and adding services as needed.

Service Realities in Rural America

To demonstrate the difficulties facing rural passenger transportation, the Conference turned to a case study of northern Nebraska, an area in danger of losing its intercity bus service. To provide a rounded perspective on the organizations and interests involved in rural passenger service, speakers included a local resident spearheading grassroots efforts to save the busline, the Nebraska Department of Roads, a transportation consultant, a private provider, and a State legislator.

Robert Brayton, former chairman of the Nebraska Public Service Commission, is a resident of Stuart, NE, a small town on the busline, and chairman of the Committee to Save the Bus. He described the vital service provided to sparsely populated northern Nebraska by the busline, both in transporting passengers and in delivering blood supplies, newspapers, film, flowers, and parts for automobiles and farm machinery. Black Hills Stage Lines, a local intercity bus company, operates the line from Omaha, NE, to Rapid City, SD. Declining revenues on the Norfolk-Chadron portion of the route led Black Hills to file for abandonment of that segment. A hearing on the abandonment led to formation of the Committee to Save the Bus. A total of \$40,000 was raised through a combination of Federal, State, and local sources, with the local share coming to \$10,000. The committee is continuing to foster local support for the line, and is working in conjunction with State and local government groups to develop the funding needed to maintain the service.

Larry Brown, transportation planner with the Nebraska Department of Roads, then explained State involvement in public transportation. Responsible for administration of the State-funded public transportation program and the federally funded Section 18 and Section 16(b)(2) programs, the Department of Roads serves as a facilitator between UMTA, the Federal funding source, the State trust fund, and the users of those funds. When Black Hills Stage Lines filed to discontinue service, the department was able to provide some State and Federal contingency funds, and cooperated with the Committee in applying locally generated monies to subsidize the busline. The committee then contacted Congresswoman Virginia Smith, who was able to obtain an UMTA grant of \$220,000. In addition to the operating subsidy, the grant called for a study of the route to provide guidance in developing an affordable way to continue the service. An extension of the original grant to May 1989 requires the department to develop a marketing program to increase ridership which will involve local community participation.

Frederic Fravel, senior associate with Ecosometrics, Inc., a transportation consulting firm, then discussed the study of the northern Nebraska route. The study used Census Bureau data to ascertain transportation needs, and found that the communities being served were largely typical of those throughout Nebraska. An onboard survey found that riders tended to be over 65 or under 24, and were using the bus to travel to a job corps site or visit relatives. There is no public transportation alternative to the bus in northern Nebraska. Yet ridership revenue alone cannot support continuation of the route. Enhancing revenues through intercity freight business has little chance since UPS has captured much of the market. Examination of alternatives such as smaller vehicles or service reductions

indicated no feasible way to generate revenues short of adding passengers. The study recommended that the State continue to seek Federal funding for ongoing operating assistance. State funding should be provided, while local efforts to market the service should begin.

C.D. Busskohl, president of Arrow Stage Lines, Inc., operator of Black Hills Stage Lines, discussed the situation facing intercity bus companies providing service in isolated rural areas. The biggest competitor for commercial transportation in rural areas is the automobile. In fact, only 17 percent of the population uses commercial transportation: The remainder drive. Several factors create special problems for public transportation in rural areas. Bus companies in general are equity, personnel, labor, and communications intensive, characteristics which require a healthy rate of return—or adequate ridership—to maintain operations. Declining ridership translates into revenue loss: Black Hills has been losing money on the northern Nebraska route for 4 years, and has been able to continue the route by cross-subsidizing it with profits generated by the charters and tours portion of the corporation. Black Hills also utilizes older equipment on the route, a factor that reduces cost and allows the service to continue. Arrow Stage Lines is working with the communities located along the route and with the Department of Roads in an effort to sustain service in northern Nebraska.

Senator Howard Lamb, chairman of the Transportation Committee of the Nebraska State Legislature, spoke about legislative involvement in the northern Nebraska route. Representing a portion of northern Nebraska, his legislative district is sparsely populated, with 2.1 people per square mile. To maintain service while alternate funding sources were sought, Senator Lamb sponsored a bill to provide Arrow Stage Lines a grant of \$150,000. Doing so was a first for Nebraska: The State has never funded rural passenger transportation, although it does subsidize urban transit. Since the bill did not get out of the Transportation Committee, it was sent to the Governor as part of the budget bill. While the Governor approved the grant, it was agreed that the appropriation was a one-shot effort, with no possibility of renewal. Senator Lamb emphasized that a long-term effort is needed or service will be discontinued in northern Nebraska, an event with unwelcome consequences for rural communities.

Transportation and Rural America in Transition

Nebraska Governor Kay Orr summarized the concerns facing transportation in rural America, focusing on the economic importance of transportation infrastructure. Chairing the Committee on Transportation, Commerce and Communication of the National Governors Association, Governor Orr questioned whether rural America is being reconnected or simply neglected. The interstate era connected America, opening veins of commerce and creating a wealthy nation. Transportation sustains America commercially and socially, but the transportation system in rural America today is facing severe strains. Rural mobility needs are particularly important in today's rural economy. As rural population shifts and services centralize, rural residents travel longer distances to access essential services, employment, and other opportunities. In describing rural mobility options, Governor Orr stated: "A bushel of corn has more travel options than the farmer who grew it."

Nebraska is addressing the transportation needs of rural America as the interstate highway era ends, and the Nation considers transportation policy for the 21st

century. Nebraska hosted the first 2020 forum, starting a process that has given rural residents and those involved in rural transportation an opportunity to voice their concerns for use in new, postinterstate, surface transportation legislation. Governor Orr closed by emphasizing the vital role of rural America in the Nation's economy. Rural areas continue to produce goods and services essential to American society—and will do so far into the foreseeable future. An effective transportation system is more critical than ever for rural America. "Reconnecting Rural America" creates an opportunity to explore how that system can be sustained and improved as the Nation moves into the 21st century.

Components of National Strategy To Reconnect Rural America

The Conference then moved to a discussion of the components of a National Strategy to reconnect rural America. As described previously, the symposia participants identified nine basic components critical to the provision of rural passenger transportation. At the National Conference, speakers with expertise in a particular component examined its significance to improving rural passenger transportation. As nationally recognized leaders in rural passenger transportation, the speakers provided Conference participants a comprehensive understanding of the issues facing rural passenger transportation today. The following summary identifies each speaker and the component addressed.

Public-Private Cooperation: Brien Benson, associate administrator for Budget and Policy at UMTA, and Harold Morgan, codirector of the Public Private Transportation Network, described the critical need for cooperation between the public and private sectors at the local, State, regional, and national levels. Such cooperation is essential to meet the mobility needs of rural residents.

Community Participation: Gayle Hook of the Jefferson Transportation Group, Inc., stated that communities must be an essential source of financial and volunteer support for rural passenger transportation providers. Continuity and sustained commitment are key elements defining community participation in rural passenger transportation.

Defined Government Roles: Martin Fitzpatrick, administrator of USDA's Office of Transportation, discussed the changing transportation roles of Federal, State, and local governments. The roles of each level need examination to determine how best to meet rural mobility needs.

Linking of Services: Fred Currey, chairman and chief executive officer of Greyhound Lines, Inc., described how linking services into a transportation system can expand transportation options for rural residents without increasing costs.

Market Research and Development: Frederic Fravel, chairman of the Committee on Intercity Bus Transportation of the Transportation Research Board, emphasized the need for an effective market research and development strategy. Such a strategy must be in place to identify the market, implement appropriate service, and develop promotion campaigns.

Diversification of Funding Sources: David Clawson, program director with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), discussed how utilizing a broad range of funding sources and allowing greater flexibility in mixing available funding can provide mobility to more rural residents.

Resource Management: Linda Wilson, president of the National Association of Transportation Alternatives (NASTA), reviewed how effective resource management for rural transportation focuses on the community within which the service is provided as well as on the system which transports rural residents.

Identification and Elimination of Barriers: Howard Foard, special assistant to the Deputy Under Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, described how regulatory barriers at the Federal, State, and local levels must be addressed to permit more effective use of available funding sources.

Mobilization of Support: David Raphael, executive director of Rural America and Stephen Stiles, senior program specialist for transportation with the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), emphasized the need to develop a broad-based coalition of those involved in rural passenger transportation. The development process would include the identification and mobilization of users, public agencies, public and private providers, trade associations, economic development groups, the business community, and rural associations.

After speakers had reviewed the nine components, Conference participants divided into workshops to develop recommended actions for implementing the national strategy. The workshop process and the actions recommended by Conference participants are outlined in the next chapter.

Conference Wrap-Up

Senator Larry Pressler of South Dakota summed up the Conference by giving a historical perspective on deregulation in rural areas. Stating that "our job is to find ways to reconnect rural America," Senator Pressler focused on cooperation, the key word found in each of the nine components: "It takes cooperation to bridge the gap between the public and private sector. . .to mobilize the support of the various agencies and organizations involved in rural intercity transportation. . .to inform rural America's population so their participation as a community is effective. . .to link the transportation services that are already serving some of rural America." Citing examples of cooperation taking place in rural areas today, Senator Pressler stated: "Together, we are making a serious attempt to reconnect rural America and subsequently build a brighter tomorrow for a part of our country that is suffering today."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A NATIONAL STRATEGY

Continuing the process begun during the regional symposia, participants used the nine components to generate actions, implementers, and timeframes for Recommendations for A National Strategy on Reconnecting Rural America. Dr. Robert Schmitt of RTR Associates, a transportation consulting firm, and Dr. David Cyra, director of Statewide Transportation Programs at the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, oriented participants to the workshop process and described the use of workshop results in the development of a National Strategy on Reconnecting Rural America. Meeting in workshops, participants addressed what needs to be done, who should take the recommended actions, and when they should take place.

This portion of the Conference report presents a summary of each component, the actions recommended, the implementing organization, and the timeframe for implementation. The recommendations include feedback received on the draft document from members of the National Planning Committee and participants at the regional and national events. Recommendations are not presented in order of priority; their order follows that developed by workshop participants. The timeframes for implementation are indicated as follows:

Immediate

Short Range—end of calendar year 1989

Long Range—after calendar year 1989

Ongoing

The following list provides organizational names and acronyms as used in the text of the recommendations.

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Acronym</i>
American Automobile Association	AAA
American Association of Retired Persons	AARP
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials	AASHTO
American Bus Association	ABA
Agency on Aging	AoA
American Farm Bureau Federation	AFBF
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association	AOPA
American Public Works Association	APWA
American Society of Travel Agents	ASTA

Cooperative Extension System	CES
Disabled American Veterans	DAV
U.S. Department of Commerce	DOC
U.S. Department of Defense	DOD
U.S. Department of Energy	DOE
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	HHS
Interstate Commerce Commission	ICC
International Taxicab Association	ITA
National Association of Counties	NACo
National Association of Towns and Townships	NATaT
National Association of Regional Councils	NARC
National Association for Transportation Alternatives	NASTA
National Congress of American Indians	NCAI
National Council of State Legislatures	NCSL
National Governors' Association	NGA
National League of Cities	NLC
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association	NRECA
National School Transportation Association	NSTA
U.S. Department of Agriculture—Office of Transportation	OT
Public Private Transportation Network	PPTN
Public Transportation Administration (recommended name for UMTA)	PTA
Regional Airline Association	RAA
Rural Development	RD
Rural Transit Assistance Program	RTAP
Transportation Research Board	TRB
United Bus Owners of America	UBOA

U.S. Department of Transportation-Urban Mass Transportation
Administration

UMTA

U.S. Department of Transportation

US DOT

Veterans of Foreign Wars

VFW

PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOPERATION

Issue

Cooperation between the public and private sectors at the local, State, regional, and national levels is essential if rural passenger transportation is to meet the mobility needs of rural residents. New approaches involving public-private, private-private, and public-public cooperation need to emerge to allow rural people greater mobility.

Recommended Action Plan

Action: Establish State ombudsperson, knowledgeable of the State's transportation resources, to involve all levels of government in the transportation planning process

Who: Governor's office, State legislature
When: Immediate

Action: State ombudsperson to develop uniform State inventories of providers (including air, rail, bus, taxi, etc.)

Who: AASHTO, State transportation agencies, UBOA, ABA, AOPA, RAA, ITA, Amtrak
When: Immediate, then ongoing

Action: State ombudsman to involve local businesses and communities in the transportation planning process at the local and State levels

Who: State transportation agencies, regional councils, local governments, private carriers, other concerned groups representing rural letter carriers, farmers, senior citizens, Indians, etc.
When: Short range

Action: Involve national associations in development and implementation of a national rural transportation strategy including the public and private sectors

Who: AARP, NSTA, AASHTO, NGA, NCSL, AFBF, Grange, NARC, NLC, NACo, UBOA, ABA, ITA, APWA, NCAI, VFW, DAV, American Legion, etc.
When: Immediate to Short Range

Action: Coordinate the transportation services provided by all modes and carriers

Who: State transportation and human service agencies with local governments, schools, private operators, and specialized transportation providers
When: Short Range

Action: Encourage the development of intermodal linkages

Who: US DOT, AASHTO, State transportation agencies, carriers

When: Short Range

Action: Develop local transit centers

Who: NASTA members, local governments, rural post offices, local businesses

When: Short Range

Action: Explore and document how transit encourages economic/community development

Who: State chambers of commerce, private sector, State economic development agencies, universities, OT, regional RD centers, regional councils

When: Short Range

MOBILIZATION OF SUPPORT

Issue

Since nobody speaks for the rural passenger, support must be mobilized to generate awareness and public support for transportation needs of rural residents. The identification and mobilization of users, public agencies, public and private providers, trade associations, economic development groups, the business community, and rural associations is needed to develop a broad-based working coalition of those working in rural passenger transportation. Mobilization needs to take place at all levels, including the national, State, and local levels. Since service is delivered at the local or regional level, mobilization is especially important to empower local people to shape appropriate programs. To be effective in sustaining a public awareness effort, mobilization of support needs to move toward developing an organizational base.

Recommended Action Plan

Action: Develop a national plan for rural communities to maintain and expand passenger transportation services

Who: US DOT, UMTA, OT, AASHTO, NCSL, NGA, NACo, NARC, NATaT, UBOA, ABA, AOPA, RAA, ITA, AFBF, Grange, NSTA, AARP, NASTA, Rural America

When: Immediate and Ongoing

Action: Develop broad-based national coalition of many organizations which identifies constituents and establishes priorities for legislative actions (e.g., 1991 surface transportation reauthorization)

Who: US DOT, UMTA, OT, AASHTO, NCSL, NGA, NACo, NARC, NATaT, UBOA, ABA, AOPA, RAA, ITA, AFBF, Grange, NSTA, AARP, NASTA, Rural America

When: Immediate and Ongoing

Action: Develop State plan and coalition to

1. Identify constituents
2. Establish priorities
3. Generate support of Governor's office, State legislators, agencies, organizations, and citizens
4. Establish a transportation clearinghouse

Who: State transportation, human service, economic/community development, and agriculture agencies; Governor's office; State AARP directors; and representatives of carriers, disabled populations, schools, businesses, medical facilities, travel and tourism, farmers, churches, etc.

When: Short Range

Action: Build local capacity through coalition building and organizational development to

1. Shape local programs
2. Work with the State
3. Assist with implementation
4. Participate in demonstration projects
5. Conduct local needs survey
6. Prepare local transportation plan
7. Build mailing list of supporters

Who: NRECA, CES, regional RD centers, regional councils, AARP chapters, civic groups, farm organizations, churches, local commerce, media, medical facilities, schools, transportation providers

When: Long Range

Action: Create public awareness at the State and local levels regarding transportation needs of rural residents, utilizing

1. Petitions
2. Letter writing to newspapers and radio stations
3. Contacts with local, State, and national officials
4. Leaflets and brochures (to users)
5. Civic and community leaders and groups
6. Town meetings
7. Surveys
8. Local committees
9. Educational programs
10. Publicity campaigns
11. Liaison with Congress, especially with District offices and staff

Who: State transportation, human service, and agriculture agencies; local transportation coalition

When: Immediate and Long Range

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Issue

Community participation is critical for the continuation of rural passenger transportation both in the public and private sectors. Community can be understood as including a larger geographic area tied together by economic, social, and transportation linkages. It can also involve individuals and organizations sharing common interests and concerns. Community participation can mean support of an intercity carrier through local marketing to ensure continued service to the community. Communities are an essential source of financial and volunteer support for rural public providers. Continuity and sustained commitment are key elements defining community participation in rural passenger transportation.

Recommended Action Plan

Action: Develop local transit leaders by

1. Identifying local "movers and shakers"

Who: Chambers of commerce; mayors and other local political leaders; leaders of churches, farm groups, AARP chapters; local transportation operators

When: Immediate

2. Educating potential leaders about the role of transit

Who: OT; regional RD centers; CES; universities; State agencies of transportation, commerce/community affairs; State AARP directors, etc.

When: Ongoing

3. Training leaders to promote and create service

Who: OT; regional RD centers; CES; UMTA (RTAP); regional councils

When: Short Range

4. Creating local transportation committee (which becomes initiator of other actions)

Who: Local governments and political leaders

When: Short Range

Action: Provide information on service by

1. Using public service announcements

Who: Local political leaders, chambers of commerce, news media

When: Immediate

2. Holding parades

Who: Chambers of commerce, travel/ tourism agencies, service clubs, and community groups

When: Immediate

3. Conducting equipment demonstrations

Who: Transportation providers

When: Immediate

4. Distributing service brochures

Who: AARP chapters, AoA, senior centers, service organizations and community groups, regional councils

When: Immediate

5. Using joint advertising

Who: Transportation providers, service clubs, and community groups

When: Immediate

Action: Be a "service advocate" to sustain and create service by

1. Collecting data on local service needs and projecting demand

Who: Local schools and colleges, regional councils, State transportation agencies, news media, AARP chapters, AOA, CES

When: Immediate

2. Creating public awareness program

Who: Transportation providers, senior centers, local governments, doctors, and businesses

When: Ongoing

3. Coalescing interest groups in community

Who: AARP (State and area offices), local governments, State transportation agency

When: Long Range

4. Identifying potential economic benefits

Who: State transportation and commerce/economic development agencies, regional councils

When: Long Range

Action: Match service with needs by

1. Talking to existing providers

Who: Local transportation committee
When: Short Range and Ongoing

2. Identifying potential service providers and types of service

Who: State transportation agency, regional councils
When: Short Range and Ongoing

3. Coordinating public/private riders

Who: State transportation and human service agencies, AOA, specialized and public transportation service providers
When: Short Range and Ongoing

Action: Create facility for transportation center by

1. Seeking linkages

Who: State AARP directors, AOA, specialized and public transportation providers, State transportation agency
When: Long Range

2. Identifying existing facilities as potential centers

Who: Local transportation committee, senior centers, schools, local historic society
When: Long Range

3. Making center a visible and vested part of community

Who: Local transportation committee, government, and associated businesses
When: Long Range

4. Tying center with associated businesses

Who: Local transportation committee, chamber of commerce, and businesses
When: Long Range

DEFINED GOVERNMENT ROLES

Issue

The transportation roles of Federal, State, and local governments are evolving during a period of transition. The Federal Government, responsible for developing national policy, is moving toward the role of facilitator and technical assistance. State governments need to create an environment supporting rural passenger transportation efforts, while local governments develop transportation responsive to local demands.

Recommended Action Plan

Federal Role

Action: Rename UMTA as Public Transportation Agency (PTA) to serve as facilitator for providers and users of rural transportation

Who: Congress

When: Immediate

Action: Coordinate development of a comprehensive national transportation policy to ensure rural mobility which includes people and goods

Who: US DOT (lead), HHS, OT, ICC, DOE, DOD

When: Short Range

Action: Modify existing programs (moving toward block grant concept)

Who: Congress

When: Short Range

Action: Coordinate implementation of a national strategy considering all modes

Who: US DOT (through national task force)

When: Ongoing

Action: Create public consensus of Government transportation roles through communication, public forums, and public awareness programs to generate public commitment

Who: Members of the national task force

When: Immediate and Ongoing

Action: Provide technical assistance

Who: UMTA (or PTA) through clearinghouse

When: Ongoing

State Role

Action: Create positive environment for rural transportation

Who: State transportation and commerce/economic development agencies,
Governor's office

When: Immediate

Action: Develop State strategies that foster coordination

Who: State transportation, human service, and commerce/economic
development agencies; Governor's office

When: Immediate

Action: Develop regional systems beyond the scope of counties or other local
jurisdictions

Who: State transportation agencies, regional councils, local governments

When: Ongoing

Action: Represent State issues in national forums

Who: Governor's office, State transportation agencies, and others as
appropriate

When: Ongoing

Action: Provide funding

Who: State legislatures, Governor's office

When: Ongoing

Action: Create public consensus of government transportation roles through
communication, public forums, and public awareness programs to generate public
commitment

Who: State transportation, human service, commerce/economic
development, and agriculture agencies

When: Immediate and Ongoing

Action: Provide technical assistance

Who: State transportation agency (lead) and others as appropriate (including
universities, consultants, etc.)

When: Ongoing

Local Role

Action: Develop responsive local systems

Who: Local government, elected officials

When: Ongoing

Action: Implement developed systems

Who: Local transportation providers (public and private)

When: Ongoing

Action: Establish local funding priorities given available funds

Who: Local elected officials, concerned citizens

When: Ongoing

Action: Create public consensus of government transportation roles through communication, public forums and public awareness programs to generate public commitment

Who: Local elected officials, regional councils, civic groups, service clubs

When: Immediate and Ongoing

LINKING OF SERVICES

Issue

While a variety of transportation services are available in rural America, they cannot be used effectively because they are not linked into a transportation system. Linking services can expand transportation options for rural residents without increasing costs. Development of a feeder system such as the Greyhound Rural Connector program and encouragement of intermodal linkages are two viable methods of linking services.

Recommended Action plan

Action: Develop policies and programs that encourage the development of a transportation system, combining services and vehicles:

1. National level

Who: UMTA, HHS, OT, DOC, UBOA, ABA, ITA, RAA, NASTA, ASTA, NCSL, AASHTO, Congress

When: Long Range and Ongoing

2. State level (serving as facilitator and coordinator)

Who: State legislatures, State transportation and human service agencies, regional councils, carriers

When: Long Range and Ongoing

3. Local level

Who: Local governments, transportation providers, carriers, taxi companies

When: Long Range and Ongoing

Action: Develop places to facilitate linking services (e.g., transportation centers providing interstate connections, utilizing airstrips, linking bus and other ground transportation, etc.)

Who: Local government, regional councils, State transportation agencies, carriers (taxis, vans, limos, buses, ferries, airlines, etc.)

When: Long Range

Action: Broaden intermodal communication and information mechanisms about available services (e.g., operators, schedules, fares, connections, etc.)

Who: Travel/tourism agencies, carriers, State transportation agencies, regional councils, CES

When: Long Range

Action: Promote interline ticketing including passengers, baggage, and packages

Who: Carriers, State transportation agencies

When: Short to Long Range

MARKET RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Issue

Information and marketing are two gaps limiting an improved rural passenger transportation system. Demographic data are lacking on rural mobility needs, ridership patterns, and potential market niches while information on current services offered by rural transportation providers is not easily available to rural residents. Marketing is key to the success of any service, but limited funds and staffing levels have hampered the ability of providers to target publicity efforts. An effective market research and development strategy is needed to identify the market, implement appropriate service, and develop promotion campaigns.

Recommended Action Plan

Action: Make available existing information by

1. Distributing Conference materials (e.g., symposia report, bibliography of studies, Conference proceedings)

Who: OT

When: Immediate

2. Summarizing and distributing current information

Who: OT, UMTA, TRB committees

When: Short Range

Action: Continue and improve basic data collection for both public and private data sources

Who: ICC, Census (National Travel Survey), UBOA, ABA, travel/tourism agencies

When: Immediate to Long Range

Action: Update State bus studies to reflect deregulation and identify rural connection opportunities (possibly using UMTA Section 8 planning funds)

Who: State transportation agencies, NASTA members

When: Short to Long Range

Action: Monitor and evaluate rural intercity linkages

Who: UMTA

When: Immediate and Ongoing

Action: Develop local marketing assistance to encourage ridership, including handbooks and other materials, advertising examples, etc.

Who: UMTA, State transportation agencies, carriers, UBOA, ABA, CES,
other associations

When: Short to Long Range

Action: Expand user information base by

1. Including rural operators

Who: Members of NASTA and RAA, airport operators, bus companies

When: Immediate to Long Range

2. Linking modes

Who: modal representatives

When: Immediate to Long Range

3. Using printed and electronic media

Who: private sector, Rural America, PPTN

When: Immediate to Long Range

4. Utilizing travel agencies

Who: Carriers in conjunction with States

When: Immediate to Long Range

Action: Use marketing techniques to reach State and local decisionmakers

Who: OT, US DOT, HHS, AARP, AASHTO, NASTA, NSTA, NARC, AOPA,
ITA, etc.

When: Immediate

DIVERSIFICATION OF FUNDING SOURCES

Issue

Since rural passenger needs are diverse, rural passenger transportation cannot rely on a single source of funding. No one level of government or private industry is solely responsible. Rather, funding is a joint effort of Federal, State, and local government in conjunction with private industry. Given the need to utilize a range of funding sources, greater flexibility in mixing the available funding from various programs could provide mobility to more rural residents. New methods of coordinating a variety of funding sources need to be developed to ensure equity in meeting rural passenger transportation needs.

Recommended Action Plan

Action: Provide parity in distribution of transportation funding among modes and demographic groups

Who: Federal and State legislators

When: Short to Long Range

Who: Federal and State Agencies

When: Immediate to Short Range

Who: Pressure groups, associations, and users

When: Immediate to Long Range

Action: Allow greater flexibility in mixing funding sources, including the coordination of available funding

Who: Pressure groups/associations and users

When: Immediate to Long Range

Who: Local agency

When: Immediate to Short Range

Who: Federal and State agencies

When: Immediate to Short Range

Action: Allow greater diversity in matching funds

Who: Pressure groups/associations and users

When: Immediate to Long Range

Who: Local agency

When: Immediate to Short Range

Who: Federal and State agencies

When: Immediate to Short Range

Action: Leverage private sector contributions

Who: Local community (e.g., individuals, businesses)

When: Immediate to Long Range

Who: Financial community; local, State, and Federal governments

When: Short to Long Range

Action: Increase funding for major related transit programs (e.g., Section 18, 16(b)(2), HHS, etc.)

Who: Federal and State legislators

When: Short to Long Range

Who: Federal and State agencies

When: Immediate to Short Range

Who: Pressure groups, associations, and users

When: Immediate to Long Range

Action: Create finance mechanisms to facilitate the effective initiation, implementation, and operation of rural transportation services (e.g., feasibility studies, risk capital, technical assistance, training)

Who: Federal and State legislators

When: Short to Long Range

Who: Federal and State agencies

When: Immediate to Short Range

Who: Pressure groups, associations, and users

When: Immediate to Long Range

Action: Fund research, market development, and innovations

Who: Community groups, State and Federal legislators, private research groups, foundations, universities, private sector

When: Short to Long Range

Action: Change laws, policies, and administrative guidelines that constrain best use of funding

Who: Federal and State legislators

When: Short to Long Range

Who: Federal and State agencies

When: Immediate to Short Range

Who: Pressure groups, associations, and users

When: Immediate to Long Range

Action: Change laws that limit funding to one agency, and permit more mixing and consolidation of funding

Who: Federal and State legislators
When: Short to Long Range

Who: Federal and State agencies
When: Immediate to Short Range

Who: Pressure groups, associations, and users
When: Immediate to Long Range

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Issue

As resources available for rural passenger transportation have tightened, flexible approaches to managing become more critical. Resource management for rural transportation focuses on the community within which the service is provided as well as the system that transports rural residents. The rural community and, in particular, rural decisionmakers, need to consider all available community resources in assuring mobility for rural residents. Rural operators are beginning to consider internal managerial flexibility as a way of life, looking to cooperative arrangements for billing, procurement, maintenance, and use of local in-kind services as ways of extending available resources.

Recommended Action Plan

Action: Implement a resource management plan (as follows) as part of the national strategy through a national task force

Who: UMTA, OT, NASTA, Rural America, APWA, PPTN, and others as interested

When: Immediate to Long Range

Action: Identify and activate an existing national resource center to provide assistance to localities and providers (public and private) to

1. Identify all sources of assistance (financial, technical, etc.)
2. Maximize resources
3. Develop transportation plans
4. Overcome legal and regulatory barriers
5. Provide toll-free hotline
6. Utilize circuit rider staff

Who: UMTA, OT, representatives of public and private providers, and local governments

When: Immediate and Ongoing

Action: Develop an educational package at the national level for wide distribution to States, providers, businesses, decisionmakers, and their national associations to

1. Inform local decisionmakers how to identify and inventory local resources to maximize their use
2. Determine local needs
3. Identify barriers and gaps in existing service, and develop a plan to overcome them that coordinates all available funding sources including those at the local, State, and national levels
4. Develop cooperative arrangements among existing providers
5. Create regional or local transportation plans

Who: UMTA, OT, AASHTO, Rural America, NASTA, NARC, NACo, NATaT, APWA, CES, UBOA, ABA, ITA, RAA, AOPA, and others as interested
When: Short Range

Action: Conduct educational programs for transportation providers and users, local leaders and decisionmakers, and national associations representing rural decisionmakers

Who: State transportation, human service, and agriculture agencies; CES; regional RD centers; State transit associations; State and national associations (e.g., NASTA, AAA, ITA, UBOA, AARP, NACo, NATaT, UMTA/RTAP, NCAI); colleges and universities
When: Short Range and Ongoing

IDENTIFICATION AND ELIMINATION OF BARRIERS

Issue

Restrictive laws, regulations, and rules, both actual and perceived, impede efficient utilization of transportation resources. Such restrictions prohibit, for example, mixing funding sources, utilizing vehicles for specified populations, or cross matching resources. Since restrictions exist at the Federal, State, and local levels, they must be addressed at each level to permit more effective use of available funding sources.

Recommended Action Plan

Action: Identify restrictive measures at Federal, State, and local levels and develop ways of overcoming barriers to provision of transit

Who: Interagency task group (including agencies of transportation, health and human services, labor, and agriculture/rural development at each level)
When: Short Range

Action: Review existing Federal and State rules and regulations that prohibit coordination; and develop strategies to address proposed changes

Who: Federal and State interagency task groups (as identified above); Governor's office
When: Short Range

Action: Encourage human service agencies to share existing resources (including vehicles) to provide for shared riding

Who: State transportation, health and human services, labor, and agriculture agencies
When: Immediate

Action: Develop policies that encourage cross-matching of funds and other resources through legislation, executive orders, administrative guidelines, and management plans

Who: Federal and State interagency task groups
When: Short Range

APPENDIX I

“RECONNECTING RURAL AMERICA”

A National Conference
on Rural Intercity Passenger Transportation

Omaha, Nebraska
August 22-24, 1988

Agenda

DAY 1 (Monday, August 22) — evening

6:30 p.m. Registration and Reception

Reception: Sponsored by Greater Omaha Convention and Visitors Bureau

Introductions: Martin Fitzpatrick, Administrator, Office of Transportation, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and Wayne Smith, Executive Director, United Bus Owners of America

DAY 2 (Tuesday, August 23) — morning

8:30 a.m. Opening Session

Opening Remarks and Moderator: Robert Furleigh, Director, State of Iowa, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service

Welcome: George Beattie, Assistant Director, Nebraska Department of Agriculture

9:00 a.m. Keynote Address: Congresswoman Virginia Smith, Nebraska

9:30 a.m. Break

9:45 a.m. Session: Structural Changes in Rural America

Moderator: Ron Powers, Former Director, North Central Regional Center for Rural Development

Demographic and Economic Changes

Speaker: J. Norman Reid, Chief, Rural Business and Government, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Transportation Service Changes

Speakers: Michael Redisch, Chief, Research and Analysis, Office of Transportation Analysis, Interstate Commerce Commission; and Carlton Robinson, Executive Vice President, Highway Users Federation

The Challenges Ahead for Rural America

Speaker: Senator Charles Cook, Chairman, New York State Legislative Commission on Rural Resources

Questions and Answers

11:30 a.m. Lunch

Introduction and USDA Perspective: Roland Vautour, Under Secretary for Small Community and Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Speaker: Brien Benson, Associate Administrator, Budget and Policy, Urban Mass Transportation Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

DAY 2 — afternoon

1:30 p.m. Session: Results of the Regional Symposia

Moderator: Harold Morgan, Senior Transportation Analyst, COMSIS Corp. (Co-Director, Public Private Transportation Network)

Rural Transportation Goals: Harold Morgan

Rural Transportation Constraints: Lowell Richards, Administrative Assistant, Division of Planning, South Dakota Department of Transportation

Rural Transportation Strategies: Herb Riley, Transportation Planner, Policy and Planning, Oregon Department of Transportation

2:30 p.m. Break

2:45 p.m. Session: Service Realities in Rural America—A Review of the Northern Nebraska Bus Situation

Moderator: George Berg, Director of National Affairs, American Farm Bureau Federation

Grassroots Effort to Save the Bus: Robert Brayton, Stuart, Nebraska (Former Chairman, Nebraska Public Service Commission)

State Effort and Role: Larry Brown, Transportation Planner, Transportation Planning, Nebraska Department of Roads

Study of Service Alternatives: Frederic Favel, Senior Associate, Ecosometrics, Inc.

Current Situation from the Provider Perspective: C.D. Busskohl, President, Arrow Stage Lines, Inc.

State Policy Perspective: Senator Howard Lamb, Chairman, Transportation Committee, Nebraska State Legislature

Questions and Answers

DAY 2 — evening

5:00 p.m. Tour of Greyhound Information Center

6:30 p.m. Reception at Hotel: Sponsored by Greyhound Lines, Inc.

DAY 3 (Wednesday, August 24) — morning

8:30 a.m. Transportation and Rural America: A Changing Equation

Introduction: Martin Fitzpatrick, Administrator, Office of Transportation, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Speaker: Governor Kay Orr, Nebraska

9:00 a.m. Session: Components of a National Strategy

Moderator: Wayne Smith, Executive Director, United Bus Owners of America

Public-Private Cooperation: Brien Benson, Associate Administrator, Budget and Policy, Urban Mass Transportation Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation; and Harold Morgan, Senior Transportation Analyst, COMSIS Corp. (Co-Director, Public Private Transportation Network)

Community Participation: Gayle Hook, Senior Vice President, Jefferson Transportation Group, Inc.

Defined Federal, State, and Local Government Roles: Martin Fitzpatrick, Administrator, Office of Transportation, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Linking of Services: Fred Currey, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Greyhound Lines, Inc.

Questions and Answers

10:25 a.m. Break

10:40 a.m. Market Research and Development: Frederic Fravel, Chairman, Committee on Intercity Bus Transportation, Transportation Research Board (Senior Associate, Ecosometrics, Inc.)

Diversification of Funding Sources: David Clawson, Program Director, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

Resource Management: Linda Wilson, President, National Association of Transportation Alternatives (Executive Director, JAUNT, Inc. (Charlottesville, Virginia)

Identification and Elimination of Barriers: Howard Foard, Special Assistant to the Deputy Under Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Mobilization of Support: David Raphael, Executive Director, Rural America; and Stephen Stiles, Senior Program Specialist for Transportation, American Association of Retired Persons

Questions and Answers

DAY 3 — afternoon

12:15 p.m. Lunch

Orientation to Strategy Development Workshops: Robert Schmitt, Transportation Consultant, RTR Associates (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania); and David Cyra, Director, Statewide Transportation Programs, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

1:15 p.m. Session 1: Developing a National Action Agenda

[Workshops and plenary review focus on action items.]

3:00 p.m. Break

3:15 p.m. Session 2: Implementing the National Strategy

[Workshops and plenary review develop implementation plan.]

DAY 3 — evening

6:30 p.m. Finale and Dinner

Introduction: Brien Benson, Associate Administrator, Budget and Policy, Urban Mass Transportation Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

Speaker: Senator Larry Pressler, South Dakota

APPENDIX II

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