

**Champaign County  
 Rural Transit Advisory Group (RTAG)**

**Thursday, September 1, 2011  
 4:00pm to 5:00pm  
 Brookens Administrative Center  
Meeting Room #3  
 1776 E Washington St.  
 Urbana, IL 61802**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**I. Call to Order**

Mr. Kulczycki called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Each member around the room announced their presence. A quorum was present.

**Chair:** Andy Kulczycki

<b>Attendees</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Jennifer Miller	Transit Reservation Information Program
Michelle Ramage	Thomasboro and Rantoul City School Districts*
Martha Paap	Provena Center for Healthy Aging*
Amy Marchant	CRIS Rural Mass Transit District
Andy Kulczycki*	Community Service Center of Northern Champaign County*
Eileen Sierra	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Chris Bruns	The Pavillion*
Minor W. Jackson III	Parkland College*
Stan James	Champaign County Board*
Elaine Palencia	Disability Advocate*
Rita Morocoima-Black	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission

\*RTAG Member

**III. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. James motioned the agenda be approved. Ms. Ramage seconded. Agenda was approved.

**IV. Approval of the Meeting Minutes**

*A. Meeting of June 2, 2011*

Mr. Jackson motioned the meeting minutes be approved, Mr. James seconded, motion passed. Ms. Palencia noted that her name was misspelled in the minutes. Her last name begins with a “P” instead of a “V”. In addition, Ms. Palencia requested having a place in the minutes for “Old Business”. The committee agreed that there will be a standing item for old business moving forward. Ms. Palencia also had a question regarding the DSC contract. Ms. Marchant noted there was no activity at this time with DSC and the ball was in their court as to when to initiate a contract. SHOW BUS is currently contracting with DSC. Ms. Palencia had a question regarding the slides attached to the agenda and if they were new material. The slides were the same CRIS Marketing efforts information distributed during the June meeting by Ms. Cooksey of CRIS. Meeting minutes were approved with changes.

## V. **New Business**

### A. *Quarterly Service Status- CRIS*

Reported by Ms. Marchant:

- May- 514 or 24/day
- June- 721 or 33/day
- July- 848 or 42/day
- August- 1178 or 56/day

Per Ms. Marchant, CRIS is at full capacity with the equipment they have. The goal was 50 per day and they have already surpassed that. CRIS will start grouping rides as the dispatchers are getting to know the clients. As for marketing, Ms. Morocoima-Black translated the brochures in Spanish. In addition, Ms. Ramage had distributed 1900 brochures in the school system. CRIS Champaign County website is almost ready and will be live in about a week. Ms. Marchant indicated that an increase in marketing may not be helpful if they do not have the resources/vehicles to accommodate an increase.

CRIS hired six new drivers in Champaign County and created a “How to Ride” guide. They are using seven buses in Champaign County; however, they were planning on a maximum of five. CRIS is still trying to get more buses.

Ms. Bruns questioned what happens after capacity is reached. Ms. Marchant indicated that the rides would have to be turned down eventually and over time you build up your fleet to meet the demand. She stated that you must continuously rework the project to better meet riders’ needs. Ms. Marchant noted that it is good to start off by serving the neediest part of the county first. She also discussed other options including JARC grants for Ogden/St. Joseph areas into Champaign-Urbana as a deviated fixed route primarily for jobs and to the medical centers. Other possible JARC routes discussed were Northern County/Rantoul into Parkland and Tolono/Savoy to Champaign-Urbana. The expansion would mean more vehicles. CRIS will put in a grant for more vehicles but it takes about 2 years for IDOT to place the grant, order, and get the manufacture these specialized vehicles. Also the question was asked about ridership in the winter time and if it increases and Ms. Marchant responded that it does increase.

Ms. Sierra reviewed the quarterly RTAG stats handout. Ms. Morocoima-Black asked Mr. James if the information presented was adequate for the Champaign County Board and Mr. James confirmed

it was. Mr. Minor noted August numbers on the stats handout did not correlate with the stats that were verbally reported earlier by Ms. Marchant. Ms. Sierra stated this occurred in the month of August because the data had not been fully collected at the time, as the month of August had only ended yesterday. She noted that the stats handout was out of date, which was indicated on the handout with August being listed in the color font orange as “incomplete”. However, Ms. Sierra confirmed that the verbally reported figures for August by Ms. Marchant were correct.

*B. Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Grant Application & Public Outreach Meeting Review*

Ms. Sierra noted that they would be getting three passenger working vans and two mini-vans. Per Ms. Sierra, the Rantoul public outreach meeting had five or six people in attendance and that these meeting minutes were available in the vehicles’ grant application.

*C. Recent News Stories*

Per Ms. Sierra, there were news stories about CRIS’s transportation in: NPR, WILL TV, RPC newsletter that is distributed to all municipalities. Mr. Kulczycki stated that he knows a reporter, Dave Hinton of the Rantoul Press and that he could potentially be interested in doing an article on CRIS. Apparently, Mr. Kulczycki and Ms. Sierra described a recent news story on the front page of the News Gazette had various inaccuracies, including one about Rantoul not having any public transit. Mr. Kulczycki also noted that the publicity seems sufficient in light of the increase in ridership. Mr. James also mentioned that word of mouth will lead to an increased in ridership. Ms. Marchant stated that nice drivers are intentionally hired by Les Woodrum, CRIS’s Champaign County transit manager, to improve word of mouth awareness. Additionally, all drivers go through a background check and drug test prior to being hired.

*D. CCRPC’s Rural Northern & Eastern Champaign County Planning Grant*

Ms. Morocoima-Black reported that IDOT had awarded the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO is RPC) a two year-rural area planning grant between \$30,000-45,000. This award goes outside the MPO’s urbanized area, but allows the MPO to use existing funding toward using their data, mapping resources, and mobility management information from HSTP/MYTRIP and CRIS to create a detailed *Rural Champaign County Mobility Management Transportation Plan* to guide transit services and other transportation option coordination. The plan will cover the northeastern quadrant of the county areas of/between Rantoul to St. Joseph, and RPC will hold public meetings regarding transportation needs and possible fixed deviated routes. The public outreach will be to transit dependent populations, families with low income, and other minority populations. The plan will work to cover all transportation agencies conducted by human service agencies and private providers in addition to CRIS services. The plan will work to have easy to access information on transportation services in the areas it covers.

*E. Transit Rider Information Project (TRIP) Presentation*

Jennifer Miller presented on the Transit Reservation Information Program (TRIP). TRIP is led by the Coles County Council on Aging. TRIP acts as a call center for HSTP Region 8, a 12 county area in East Central Illinois. TRIP works with seven 5311 transportation providers. TRIP provides coordination of existing transportation providers for trips going long distances outside of the county. The intent is to expand services not take over existing services. Priority rides are for medical, work and education. A fee of .50 is assessed per coordinated ride, plus the costs of the transportation by

the provider(s). It is part of a 3 year grant and the goal is to complete 300 coordinated rides or 15 per month. In August, 2011, they had done 27. Ms. Miller did note that it is a new program and they are working out all of the issues. Details of the program can be found in the brochure that was distributed. Jennifer Miller can be contacted at 217-639-5154 or [jenniferm@colescouncilonaging.org](mailto:jenniferm@colescouncilonaging.org).

The committee discussed in depth, the opportunities that the TRIP project could provide for our traveling residents of Champaign County and visitors that would like to travel here. The committee agreed that we would participate on a case by case basis in the project, depending on the availability of a vehicle and a driver. Our priority remains, North Champaign County Transit, at this time.

Mr. James mentioned that the TRIP information should be incorporated on the CRIS website. Mr. James also asked whether veterans from Rantoul can get a ride to Danville's Veteran Affairs (VA) Hospital. Ms. Marchant said that service was available through a program they base out of Danville.

#### **VI. Announcements/Audience Participation**

Ms. Palencia announced that there was a Disability Expo on October 16 at Lincoln Square, which is being co-hosted by the Champaign County Mental Health Board. She noted that it would likely be a good opportunity to build community awareness of CRIS's rural services.

#### **VII. Adjournment**

The date for the next meeting is December 1 from 4:00-5:00 p.m. at the Jennifer Putnam Room. Mr. Kulczycki adjourned the meeting at 5:00 p.m.