

**Champaign County
 Rural Transit Advisory Group (RTAG)
 Thursday, June 2nd, 2011
 4:00-5:00 p.m.
 Brookens Administrative Center
 Jennifer Putnam Room
 1776 E. Washington St.
 Urbana, IL 61802**

MEETING MINUTES

I. Call to Order

Mr. Kulczycki called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Morocoima-Black called the roll call. A quorum was present. Amy Marchant joined the meeting by phone.

Attendees *RTAG Member

Name	Organization
Chris Bruns*	The Pavilion
Kathy Cooksey	CRIS Rural Mass Transit District
Elaine Fowler Palencia*	People with Disabilities Advocate
Nicole George	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Stan James*	Champaign County Board
Andy Kulczycki*	Community Service Center of Northern Champaign County
Amy Marchant	CRIS Rural Mass Transit District
Rita Morocoima-Black	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Martha Paap*	Provena Center for Healthy Aging
Michelle Ramage*	Thomasboro and Rantoul City School Districts
Eileen Sierra	Champaign County Regional Planning Commission
Dan Petrella	CU Citizen Access

Chair: Andy Kulczycki

III. Approval of Agenda

Mr. James motioned the agenda be approved. Ms. Ramage seconded. Motion passed. Ms. Ramage requested the agenda be amended to include approval of the meeting minutes. Mr. James agreed with the amendment.

III. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

A. Meeting of March 3rd, 2011

Ms. Ramage motioned the meeting minutes be approved, Mr. James seconded, motion passed. Ms. Ramage requested “meeting notes” change to “meeting minutes”, change was agreed on. Mr. James noted that the minutes were very complete, but could be condensed to save time. Mr. Kulczycki appreciated detail minutes as the group is only meeting quarterly. Meeting minutes were approved.

IV. New Business

A. Public relations efforts

Ms. Cooksey distributed a PowerPoint handout that included:

- CRIS’s new Champaign office location in Urbana at the old C-U MTD offices;
- New phone number - 217.344.4BUS);
- Outlined CRIS’s public relations efforts -
 - Newspaper advertising (dates provided),
 - Rantoul billboards (posted in April until June 6th),
 - Posters (25 distribute, various locations provided in handouts – additionally Rantoul City Schools),
 - Brochures (500 distributed and locations provided – copies available),
 - Personal letters to Carl Clinic locations, which resulted in a schedule meeting between Ms. Marchant and Jim Snyder to discuss how they can support transporting patients to the Rantoul clinics and how Carl can assist in spreading the word about available services,
 - Health Alliance Health Fair on May 5th where over 150 brochures were distributed (open to any other fairs that may be available), and
 - Another round of brochure distribution.

Ms. Ramage indicated that she would like brochures distributed to kids during school registration of the Thomasboro and Rantoul Districts. Ms. Cooksey agreed to provide 1600 brochures for Rantoul and 175 for Thomasboro, and she can provide a black and white poster for easier replication by schools. Members had questions about why locations were selected. Ms. Cooksey indicated locations for distributions were based on requests, popular community centers, etc. and that CRIS is contacting churches to speak to civic groups; however the group should feel free to contact with any additional locations. Members wanted to expand the brochure distribution list to other organizations such as American Lutheran Church, Rantoul Recreation Center, Rantoul Chamber of Commerce, and Village Offices of Rantoul and Thomasboro. Ms. Marchant indicated that they will be presenting to City Township Council meetings in smaller towns like Thomasboro and Ludlow and that she can email out the dates of those presentations once they are confirmed for RTAG members to attend. Mr. James confirmed that Ludlow has a community center and a good contact would be the Mayor, Pete Walker. Ms. Cooksey indicated that Mr. Les Woodrum, CRIS Champaign transit manager, is developing a webpage. Ms. James noted several residents of Prairie Village used CRIS and when they tried to book a second time it was full, word is getting out.

B. DSC Interaction with CRIS

Ms. Morocoima-Black commented that Ms. Marchant had been working to secure a service contract with DSC, but that was still in the works and was not looking likely. Ms. Marchant added that it has been a challenge to create a collaborative relationship, but they are continuing to try in this endeavor. Mr. James noted one community member, a former bus driver for a residential home, stated that SHOW BUS recently took over their resident home transportation. Ms. Ramage added that they were aware of service being provided by SHOW BUS to transport people with disabilities, likely several were Rantoul residents; even though CRIS should be providing that service as SHOW BUS's contract is with Ford and Iroquois Counties. Mr. Kulczycki noted there were efficiency issues that could be discussed on both sides.

C. Current Service Status

Ms. Cooksey noted that awareness is growing and she provided some statistics for Northern Rural Champaign County:

- In March, about 15 rides a day or 310 a month;
- In April, about 18 rides a day or 353 a month; and
- In May, about 24 rides a day or 485 a month.

In contrast, CRIS provides 300-350 rides/day in Vermilion County; however, Ms. Marchant noted that the numbers provided above are similar to other rural areas of similar demographics and that those numbers cover the entire county. Ms. George confirmed that those numbers were similar to very rural counties, and that these figures were a good start for a newer system. Ms. Marchant indicated a goal for the first year is 50 riders a day, given the current equipment {capacity} limitations as the system is renting four vehicles from Vermillion County. It is not anticipated that Champaign County's vehicles will be delivered for the next two years; and there are limits to the number of Vermillion vehicles that can be rented, which will need to be considered when expanding the system. However, Ms. Marchant noted the system could handle quite a bit more rider volume. Mr. Kulczycki indicated he would like to see quarterly printed stats with starting and ending points along with monthly rider numbers to see where trips are occurring for county residents. These statistics could be attached to the agenda or distributed at the meetings.

Mr. Kulczycki asked if there were any other barriers or difficulties since the service started. Ms. Marchant outlined one concern about the affordability of \$5 fare as discouraging more usage of the system and asked if the fare should be dropped to \$2. Mr. Kulczycki suggested creating a frequent rider discount fares. Mr. James thought compared to the current cost of gas and upkeep of a car that a \$5 fare was reasonable; but if they were to drop it to start at \$3 in order to avoid raising it in the future, and to avoid giving the false impression that it is a free ride. Discussions about the budget, the small percentage fares are in the total budget, impact it may have realistically on ridership, and concerns about the impact on populations with disabilities. There was a general consensus that not enough time had passed to see fares impact on ridership. The committee agreed to keep the cost at \$5 for 6-9 months and then see what actions need to take place, if any. Ms. Marchant noted that there are currently discounts/lower fares for people with disabilities paying \$2 each way, and kids ride is \$1 each way.

D. CCRPC oversight responsibilities

Ms. Morocoima-Black and Ms. Sierra described how Champaign Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) role would slightly change, and they would continue to facilitate RTAG and public meeting documents on behalf of the Champaign County staff. Ms. Morocoima-Black noted that the county's website has a page to post RTAG's agendas and meeting minutes. Specifically, CCRPC will assist with oversight, preparation of the annual report(s), and related statistics. However, not all responsibilities were clear at this time, but there are ongoing discussions with CRIS. Mr. James indicated this had always been the intention on his side of the county board to have CCRPC prepare a report for approval; instead of the county directly managing RTAG. Mr. James noted an annual report with maps, numbers of destinations, and locations described by Mr. Kulczycki would be well received by the county board. Examples of monthly reporting from Piatt and Coles Counties' rural public transit systems were passed around. Ms. Morocoima-Black stated that a report will be provided before the end of the fiscal year, most likely in November.

V. Announcements/Audience Participation

Dan Petrella with CU Citizen Access was present and was taking notes as he was working on a story about poverty in rural areas. In particular, transportation access was an issue his group was covering. More information can be obtained at their website: <http://cu-citizenaccess.org/>

Harvest Fest is the Sunday before July 4th and is an important outreach event for the Latino population in Rantoul. Ms. Morocoima-Black can provide contact information. She will also translate the CRIS brochure in Spanish. The brochure can be distributed to the Migrant Parent meetings at the high school according to Ms. Ramage.

Ms. George announced it was her last day. She accepted a position with Illinois Department of Transportation in Springfield working with planning/programming transit and rail. Ms. Sierra will be her replacement. The group offered their support and congratulations to Ms. George. All were impressed with how well she had done her job at CCRPC and throughout the Champaign County ICCT Primer Process.

VI. Adjournment

The date for the next meeting is September 1st from 4:00-5:00 p.m. at the Jennifer Putnam Room. Mr. Kulczycki adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.