



REGIONAL BUS AUTHORITY

connections

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Unified Approach: Support For Our Public Transit Providers

We are likely in the most challenging period for public transportation in recent history in the face of a changing national and global economy.

The RBA in working with our regional providers like the Gary Public Transit Corporation, works to enhance regional services and to assist in dealing with our providers aging fleets.

For example, last September, the GPTC entered into a \$1.3 million contract with the RBA to strengthen regional routes across six communities.

Also, GPTC by 2010, they anticipate that two-thirds of their fleet will be renewed, thanks to the Regional Bus Authority (RBA), Stimulus funds, and other sources. As you can imagine, the cost of maintaining aging vehicles is significant.

As you can see, by providing direction and support to our transit providers, The Regional Bus Authority (RBA) with the help of the Regional Development Authority (RDA) we are pursuing a unified approach to provide a strong future for public transportation in Northwest Indiana.

*From Tim Brown,
Executive Director,
Regional Bus Authority*

GPTC Wants to be Part of Regional Transit!

By Daryl Lampkins, General Manager, GPTC

Much attention has been given to transit providers and the problems we face from lack of funding in our communities.

But there is another story of “can do” and “perseverance” that needs to be told that is often overlooked.



For over three-and-one-half years, it has been my privilege to serve the Gary Public Transit Corporation (GPTC). Yes, we have our share of challenges, but we have also made progress in the face of continuous declining budgets.

This is especially important now as we think about consolidation and building a regional network to connect the citizens of Northwest Indiana.

As we consider a new system, it might be helpful to consider assets that are important to GPTC and the citizens of Gary. Could they be important to Northwest Indiana as well? Perhaps!

Could the Adam Benjamin Jr. Metro Center serve as key link in a new system? We often talk about coordinating bus and rail together. We have it all here! This facility has commuter rail, bus and Greyhound service in one location.

Could the GPTC operations serve as a future hub of a regional transit system? This once state-of-the-art bus barn has the capacity to house 100 buses. We have invested in improvements and we need to do even more. But perhaps it has a future beyond its current limited use.

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GPTC Wants to be Part of Regional Transit!

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But I am absolutely certain on this point. The lack of funding is having a significant impact upon GPTC operations. Our staff is doing everything possible to maintain as much service as possible. But no amount of creativity can overcome a lack of a dedicated funding source.

So I want to urge a caution! There are some who believe our existing systems should be allowed to fail. That is very dangerous. We will lose funds that will go to more robust transportation systems, and we will lose key members of our staffs.

Since arriving in my position, we have rebuilt our senior management team with new talent, energy, and abilities. We have introduced a new culture of accountability. Sure, we realize we have a ways to go, but we have made progress.

We have also begun to replace our aging fleet. When I came here in 2005, over 80% of our now 21-bus fleet were at or exceeded their lifetime of service. We have transitioned our vans, and by 2010, we anticipate that two-thirds of our fleet will be renewed.

Meanwhile, we are resolving problems raised by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) as a result of past practices that have been replaced with new systems. Today, we have completed over 98% of all issues raised as part of FTA's "recovery" plan.

Most importantly, we welcome a conversation about consolidation of urban transit agencies. The Regional Development Authority (RDA) and the Regional Bus Authority (RBA) are pursuing a unified approach. I hope GPTC can be part of the solution, given our assets as the largest system in Lake County.



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