
***22nd* ANNUAL
TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED
2014 AWARDS PROGRAM**

July 30, 2014

Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld



*The Florida Commission for the
Transportation Disadvantaged*

2014 Nominees

Arne Skarstad

Beatrice Pinder

Billy Bennett

Broward County Local Coordinating Board

Broward County Transit

Calhoun Transit

Collier Area Transit

Collier County Local Coordinating Board

Collier Metropolitan Planning Organization

Eddie Romero

ElderPoint Ministries

Gulf County ARC & Transportation

James Hamilton

Jane Walker

Joe & Kitty King

Lake County Public Transportation

Larry Osband

2014 Nominees

Linda Carter

MV Transportation, Inc.

Marvin Bonny

Michael Raposa

Monroe County Local Coordinating Board

Northeast Florida Regional Council

Pinellas County Local Coordinating Board

Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority

Polk County Transit Services

Polk Transportation Planning Organization

Sharon Peeler

Sheryl Hartzog

Susan Smeltzer

Suwannee River Economic Council

Votran

William Reynolds

ELECTED OFFICIAL of the YEAR



***The Honorable
Audrey Gibson
The Florida Senate
Senator, District 9***

Senator Audrey Gibson has been representing the people of Northeast Florida in the Legislature since 2002. She was a member of the Florida House of Representatives from 2002 – 2010. In 2011, Senator Gibson was elected to the Florida Senate and re-elected in 2012.

Senator Gibson is a tireless advocate for older adults, persons with disabilities and people with low incomes.

As a member of the Senate's Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism & Economic Development, Senator Gibson was instrumental in appropriating \$10 million of additional funding for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program over the past two years.



ELECTED OFFICIAL of the YEAR



***The Honorable
Eula Clarke
City of Stuart,
Commissioner***

Ms. Clarke has served as Chair of the Martin County Local Coordinating Board for more than three years.

Ms. Clarke began her career as a Land Use Transportation Planner. She earned her Masters in Urban/Regional Planning at Florida State University and later received a Juris Doctorate from the University of Florida.

Ms. Clarke was elected to the Stuart City Commission in 2011 and served as the Mayor in 2012. She recently facilitated a transit fair to educate the public as well as agencies directly assisting the community. Ms. Clarke has proven to be a leader in improving access and availability of transportation for our most vulnerable citizens.



ELECTED OFFICIAL of the YEAR

Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners

The Hillsborough County BOCC is the designated CTC for Hillsborough County. The BOCC has supported the transportation disadvantaged as a collective board by ensuring the Sunshine Line is properly funded to better meet the transportation needs of the residents who depend on it. Without this additional funding, more than half of the current clients would not be able to receive transportation services.

The BOCC and the County Administrator help to ensure that disadvantaged residents' needs are being met by providing valuable leadership and guidance. This is evident by the outstanding performance of Sunshine Line which has provided award-winning service and exceeded performance standards for several years.



Hillsborough County
GOVERNMENT
Florida



VOLUNTEERS of the YEAR

Jane Walker and Michael Raposa ***Pinellas County***

Ms. Jane Walker (Pinellas County LCB Member) and Mr. Michael Raposa (Vice Chair of the Homeless Providers Council) together volunteered to bring the CTC, LCB, and the agencies that serve the homeless to work together to develop short and long-term means of addressing the transportation needs of homeless individuals in Pinellas County.

Working together, they were successful in advocating against an increase in co-pay requirements. In addition, they were able to assist the homeless in obtaining proof of identity and identified an easier, yet accountable, means for the CTC to determine eligibility for those with no income. These changes alone increased access to transportation options for individuals who were eligible but had difficulty in providing the required documentation needed to validate their eligibility.



DISPATCHER~SCHEDULER of the YEAR

Billy Bennett

Suwannee Valley Transit Authority



Billy has frequently gone above and beyond the call of duty over the past year. Although there are many times when last minute reservations are requested and accommodated, a few significant events occurred over this last year which could have proven detrimental to our clients' transportation.

In November 2013, the majority of our subcontracted vendor vehicles were red lined and all trips were returned to SVTA with very little notice. Billy painstakingly resealed the 70+ trips spread throughout SVTA's drivers for the next day and somehow made it all work. In April 2014, SVTA switched to another scheduling software. Again it was Billy who ensured that our clients' transportation was scheduled and the clients got to their appointments without a hitch. This past May, another big change occurred for our Agency. Dispatch was tasked with learning the new intricacies with the new HMO/TMO providers. As for Billy Bennett, he just rolls with it and smiles. Billy does not feel like he is doing anything out of the ordinary. He just cares deeply for our riders.



DISPATCHER~SCHEDULER of the YEAR



William Reynolds
Votran

William “Bill” Reynolds has been a dedicated Votran Paratransit scheduler since 2001. His career began as a fixed route bus operator in 1999. He demonstrates a profound ability to schedule not only Votran’s Paratransit routes, but also those of the subcontractors. Bill is well liked by fellow employees and has earned the utmost respect of the management team.

Mr. Reynolds has assisted with Votran’s hosting of the fixed route and Paratransit bus roadeos. He is the first to volunteer to assist with special events, weather related evacuations and works overtime to ensure the passengers receive the service they depend on and expect from Votran.



DRIVER of the YEAR



Eddie Romero ***Clay Transit***

Eddie joined Clay Transit as a driver in 2011. With an excellent safety record and obvious dedication to his job, it is not hard to understand why he is the Driver of the Year.

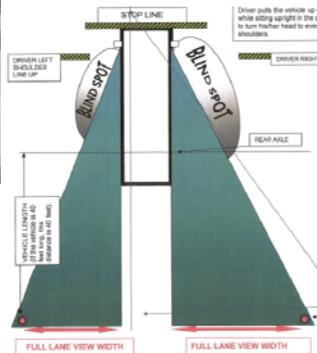
Eddie provides outstanding service for the clients he transports. The compassion and attention he shows every day goes above and beyond what is expected both at work and on his personal time. From always providing safe and timely transportation to volunteering his personal time helping clients, you can always count on Eddie. He has helped clients move, fix eye glasses, purchased books, these are just a few things that Eddie consistently takes on. Eddie's co-workers are the first to recognize that Eddie is someone special. He is always a team player, always has a great attitude, and will be the first to assist with additional pickups when needed.



SAFETY of the YEAR

Collier Area Transit

Transportation safety is always a priority for Collier County. In an effort to improve transportation safety, Collier Area Transit created its first Operator Mirror Check Station. As part of its regular pull out process, operators must stop at this check station to ensure mirrors are properly positioned to eliminate potential blind spots. Since the pull out procedure has been updated to include this mirror check station, there have been “0” chargeable accidents during the transportation of Transportation Disadvantaged clients.



OPERATOR of the YEAR

ElderPoint Ministries Polk County

Everywhere there are gaps in public transportation where either individuals can't qualify for services or there are inadequate funds available. When Jane Hammond and her dedicated group of volunteers saw the transportation need for thousands of Polk County residents, they jumped at the opportunity to help form the innovative Bluebird Service of volunteer drivers.

In fiscal year 2013-2014, ElderPoint volunteers have provided over 3,500 rides to 411 unduplicated clients rolling over 64,000 miles. Volunteers have



contributed over 7,800 hours of service ensuring that the transportation disadvantaged of Polk County are being served. This compassionate non-profit agency, along with Polk County Transit Services, have been working together to bridge the transportation gap as a viable solution that will blanket the county. The scope of the need has drivers exceeding the borders of Polk County to taking clients to Tampa, Orlando and Gainesville for medical appointments. It's a monstrous responsibility and daunting task, but it's getting done and people are getting their transportation needs met.



INNOVATION of the YEAR

Broward County Transit



Throughout 2014, Broward County Transit (BCT) continued to develop and utilize innovative approaches to coordinating transportation, improving customer service, and enhancing the coordination of the transportation system. These include: quarterly electronic reporting from BCT's 42 contractors which is validated and consolidated automatically; utilization of the on-line preventative maintenance software to ensure all vehicles are properly maintained and safe to use; improving customer service with the use of innovative technologies in its scheduling system and the implementation of Interactive Voice Response so riders are aware of their pickup times; and improving and enhancing the coordination of the transportation system for veterans. BCT always strives to provide safe, efficient and quality service and continues to implement innovative approaches to achieve its goal.



PLANNING AGENCY of the YEAR

Northeast Florida Regional Council

The Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) is the designated official planning agency for Baker, Clay, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam and St. Johns counties. Through the efforts of one of their senior planners, Ed Lehman, this planning agency successfully staffs six local coordinating boards and constantly interfaces with local governments to ensure continuity in the provision of transportation disadvantaged (TD) services. In an effort to stay abreast of the numerous changes facing the coordinated transportation system, the NEFRC participates in meetings and workshops held by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged to be able to communicate those changes and provide guidance as needed. Staff strives to keep its Community Transportation Coordinators informed of legislation and trends affecting the TD Program.

The NEFRC has also been very active in the development of regional transit in northeast Florida. Its leadership role in the Northeast Florida Regional Mobility Coalition is only one example. Staff continues to facilitate regional efforts to offer seamless transportation to residents across jurisdictional boundaries and enhance transportation service availability and accessibility.



OUTSTANDING LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD

Monroe County

The Monroe County Local Coordinating Board (LCB) continually demonstrates a passion and commitment to fight disparities for the transportation disadvantaged in Monroe County.

Comprised of a range of individuals from elected officials to system users; each one brings their own unique perspective, re-



sulting in a rich and diverse board. The LCB's dedication can be witnessed by the many miles and hours each member endures just to be present at every meeting. Due to the geography of the county with 822 islands and over 120 miles in length, it takes the majority of the members over an hour of travel time one way to support LCB activities.

The success of the coordinated transportation system in Monroe County is a direct result of the ingenuity of our local partners, the CTC and the transportation operators. The LCB continues to work towards a comprehensive transportation system with connectivity to Miami-Dade, while keeping the unique identity and culture of Monroe County. Unmet Trip requests in Monroe County have increased and remains a top priority. The LCB with its providers will continue to encourage the utilization of cost-saving means of transportation and educate others on the need for additional funding to achieve its operational objectives.



RURAL CTC of the YEAR

Lake County Board of County Commission, Public Transportation



The goal of Lake County is to provide an efficient transportation system to meet the mobility needs of the transportation disadvantaged.

*Transportation coordination addresses multiple needs and goals on a limited budget. Leadership, continuity, and participation are critical. Lake County CTC is working hard to provide more effective transportation solutions that lead to better access to jobs and always strives to identify system efficiencies. The public transportation staff works pro-actively to solve all transportation disadvantaged issues. The CTC has worked tirelessly to provide a smooth transition with their new operator, Ride Right, and is able to meet their goal of providing an efficient and effective transportation system to meet the mobility needs of the transportation disadvantaged in Lake County. The CTC has established the “**Mary Bennett Rule**” which allows potential riders to meet eligibility requirements to include services to all dialysis and long-term medical conditions regardless of their income.*



URBAN CTC of the YEAR

Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority

In 2013, their first full year as the designated CTC, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) has embraced what it means to be the CTC for Pinellas County. In that time, PSTA streamlined the TD application process; earned excellent ratings in the CTC evaluation; responded quickly and thoroughly to the TD community; and provided new services to support the transportation disadvantaged. Providing coordinated service in a cost-effective manner has been PSTA's defining characteristic. As CTC, PSTA works diligently with human service agencies to understand how to better serve the community and provide opportunities that are both cost effective and meet the needs of the community.

- *PSTA's partnership with these human service agencies has proven successful in the delivery of group trips. These group trips are both cost-effective and are able to serve a large population. By thinking creatively about the transportation needs in the community, PSTA is able to provide a wide range of service options, maximizing limited resources. PSTA achieved full compliance with Chapter 427, F.S. and Rule 41-2 F.A.C., as reported in the annual CTC Evaluation Report. The report recognized a 96 percent compliance rate in on-time performance by its ambulatory provider and a 98 percent compliance rate by its wheelchair provider. Less than one percent of trips provided were no-shows, reflecting successful implementation of a recently adopted no-show policy. Less than 0.2 percent of all trips provided resulted in complaints filed by passengers. The evaluation also revealed a very high satisfaction rate among individuals utilizing CTC services. These evaluation results reflected a successful transition of the County's TD Program to PSTA as the new CTC, which oversaw the delivery of over 3.3 million trips from July 2012 to June 2013.*



SHEILA WINITZER SHINING STAR AWARD



Sharon Peeler

JTrans

Sharon, a Florida native, has been working within the coordinated system since 1988 when she started as a driver with the Jackson County ARC and the Jackson County Senior Program.

Sharon progressed from driver to scheduling and dispatching and then became Fiscal Manager. In 2003, she assumed her current duties as the Executive Director of JTrans. She has maintained her Community Transportation Manager (CCTM) certification since 2005 from the Community Transportation Association of America and has been a Passenger Service & Safety (PASS) Instructor since 2009.

Under Sharon's leadership, JTrans was designated as the Community Transportation Coordinator in 2008 and again in 2013. While working within Florida's coordinated transportation system, Sharon has assumed numerous leadership positions including: Member of the Florida Rural Transportation Assistance Program Advisory Board, Treasurer of the Florida Association of Coordinated Transportation Systems, and Member of the Florida Public Transportation Association Board. Well known statewide for her knowledge and experience in public transportation, Sharon has always been willing to serve as a peer advisor to other Florida coordinated transportation systems.



WILLIAM G. and BUDD BELL
Lifetime Achievement Award



Joe & Kitty King

To look at Joe and Kitty you would see a couple who were as much best friends as they are husband and wife. To see them, you would never know that the advocacy of this adorable senior couple played a major role in the arrival of public transportation in the City of Winter Haven. Joe is legally blind and Kitty is sightless, but they had a vision to make sure their community had a way to maintain their independence.

● *Their quest began in mid-1990's when they shared their transit vision with members of the National Federation of the Blind—Polk County Chapter. With that support, they persuaded the owners and managers of 175 area businesses into signing endorsements for the transit service. Joe & Kitty took their messages to the city officials of Winter Haven, being present at all local meetings with their message “The people of Winter Haven need and want public transportation” . Their tenacity and efforts finally paid off when in March 1999 they took their maiden voyage with the first ride. The King's driving force set in motion rides for millions of passengers.*

Winter Haven Area Transit provides more than 600,000 rides per year and Joe and Kitty enjoy the service daily to get to the store, medical appointments and employment. “People can get out and do something instead of becoming prisoners in their own homes,” Joe King said. We could have very easily done nothing....we couldn't do that. That's not who we are.”



2013 Award Recipients

Elected Officials of the Year
Commissioner Doug Conkey, Clay County
Commissioner Donna Fiala, Collier County

Volunteer of the Year
Mary Link Bennett

Driver of the Year
Patricia Adams and Stewart Wood

Dispatcher-Scheduler of the Year
Star Metro Call Center Dispatch & Mobility Team

Innovation of the Year
Jacksonville Transportation Authority

Planning Agency of the Year
Lake-Sumter MPO



2013 Award Recipients

Local Coordinating Board of the Year
Miami-Dade

Rural CTC of the Year
Citrus County Transit

Urban CTC of the Year
Sunshine Line-Hillsborough County

Sheila Winitzer Shining Star Award
Jim Van Pelt

William G and Budd Bell
Lifetime Achievement Award
Cathy Brown



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