



# Intermodal Express

Making Transportation Connections

Summer 2007  
Vol. 1 No. 3

## NEW PERSPECTIVES

*An interview with Linda Tisdale, Executive Director, Springfield Mass Transit District (SMTD)*

*One of the state's newest transit agency chiefs gives readers her perspective on the current state of transit and shares the agency's visions for the future...*

### What's the best thing about your new role as head of a transit agency?

Thus far, it has been the interaction with the staff. There is a sense of cooperation and sharing of a common goal. We have dedicated people working for the Springfield Mass Transit District who take pride in doing a good job and who look forward to continual improvements in the operation. It makes coming to work every day a real pleasure.

### Besides funding, what are the top two critical issues facing your agency.

We have two new projects on the table. The SMTD will begin night service in the near future. We have spent many months working with local grassroots groups to design routes to accommodate an evening workforce. We have to put the finishing touches on schedules and hire personnel to cover the service.

The second project is a new multi-modal transfer center. We received an earmark for Federal Section 5309 funding for preliminary engineering and land acquisition. There is approximately \$5 million over 4 years from 2006 to 2009. We will pursue future funding to complete the construction in two phases. The first phase will complete the transfer center and the second phase will complete the multi-modal portion.

### What short-term and long-term visions do you have for your transit agency?

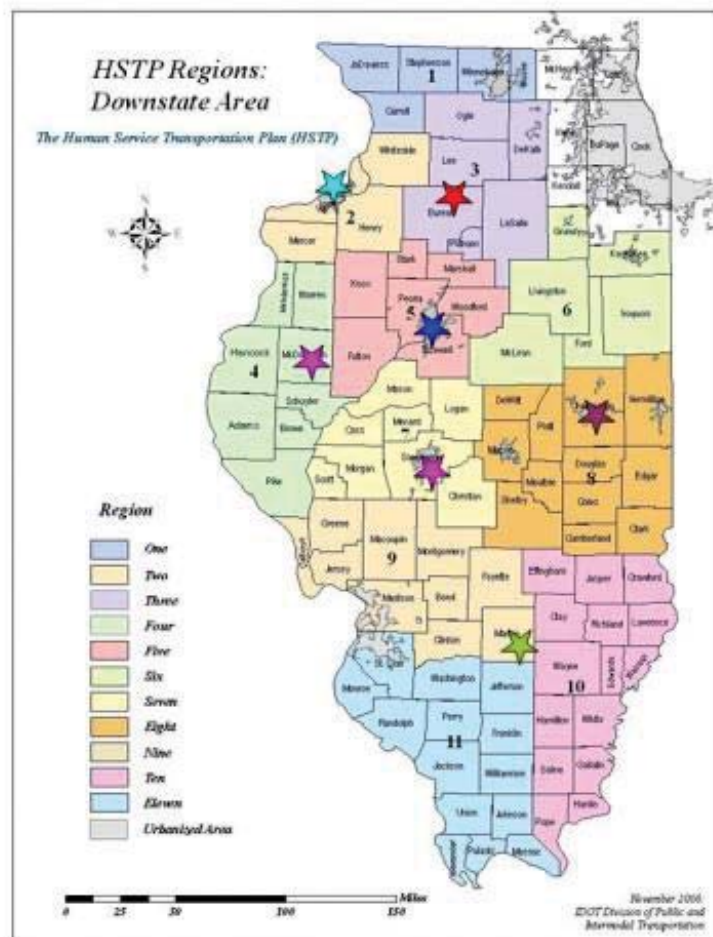
For the short term, I have to complete some projects that were started before I was selected for the position. We have a major construction project in the works which will include a new maintenance garage, parts area and training room. All of this work will be completed on our current property, so we will have major sequencing issues as well as attempting to keep the maintenance department in operation while all of this is progressing. We will demolish two structures and renovate the southern end of our storage garage as well. I am also working with a program through the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce whose objective is to spark economic growth in Springfield. The support of infrastructure systems, including mass transit, is a major part of the initiative. I believe that both of the projects will contribute to a successful operation.

Long-term, I would like to develop a regular replacement schedule for our fleet and support equipment and also complete a comprehensive operational analysis. Although gas prices have contributed to some small gains in our ridership, I would like to see how improvements in our service can encourage new ridership.



## COORDINATED TRANSIT PLANNING UNDERWAY FOR RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE

By Erica Interrante



### Illinois Regional Planning Council Office Sites

- ★ North Central Illinois Council of Governments, Princeton  
Regions 1 and 3: full-time
- ★ Bi-state Regional Commission, Rock Island  
Region 2: Part-time
- ★ Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Peoria (also MPO)  
Region 5: Part-time
- ★ Champaign County Regional Planning Commission, Champaign (also MPO)  
Region 6 and 8: full-time
- ★ Office share: Western Illinois Regional Council, Macomb & Springfield-Sangamon County RPC, Springfield  
Region 4 and 7: full-time (by WIRC)
- ★ South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development, Salem  
Region 9, 10 and 11: 2 full-time

The federally mandated **Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plans (HSTP)** for the Rural Planning Regions of the state has entered its second phase of implementation. Staff is pursuing several activities to push this effort forward including: providing the HSTP regions with guidance on plan development, establishing Regional Transportation Committees (RTC), and hiring seven Regional Planning Coordinators. These coordinators will facilitate RTC meetings, prepare the plan documents, and program projects selected for funding.

This spring, informational meetings were held in each region to update stakeholders on plan elements and solicit input on the makeup of the Regional Transportation Committees. Statewide, approximately 300 people attended the meetings, held at local sites which included senior and employment

training centers as well as community colleges to attract the input of key stakeholders. Meeting presentations covered data collection methods and meeting management, as well as demonstrating GIS mapping techniques to identify service gaps and define Levels of Service (LOS) for cataloging demand-responsive transit routes.

As the HSTP initiative moves into its third and final phase, Regional Planning Coordinators will be working within their regions (*see above map of office locations*) to develop and implement the plans with input provided from the RTC's. All coordinators will be hired and ready to start working on the plan in their respective regions by the end of August 2007.

*For contact information or questions about HSTP development, please call Erica Interrante (312) 793-3532.*

## 2007 IPTA FALL CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

# “TRANSIT ROCKS” IN MOLINE, ILLINOIS

By Linda Podeschi

Mark your calendars now for the 2007 Illinois Public Transportation Association Fall Conference, September 24 – 26 at the Stoney Creek Inn & Conference Center. This year's host is **MetroLINK**, Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District. The conference features valuable learning sessions as well as networking opportunities with peers. A product and services showcase will highlight the very latest in transit product design and function.

*Here's a preview of some of the activities that will take place at the conference:*

### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

10th Annual Ashby Golf Outing at Pinnacle County Club in Milan begins at 12:30 pm. Contact Dan Payne at 309.786.3081 for more information.

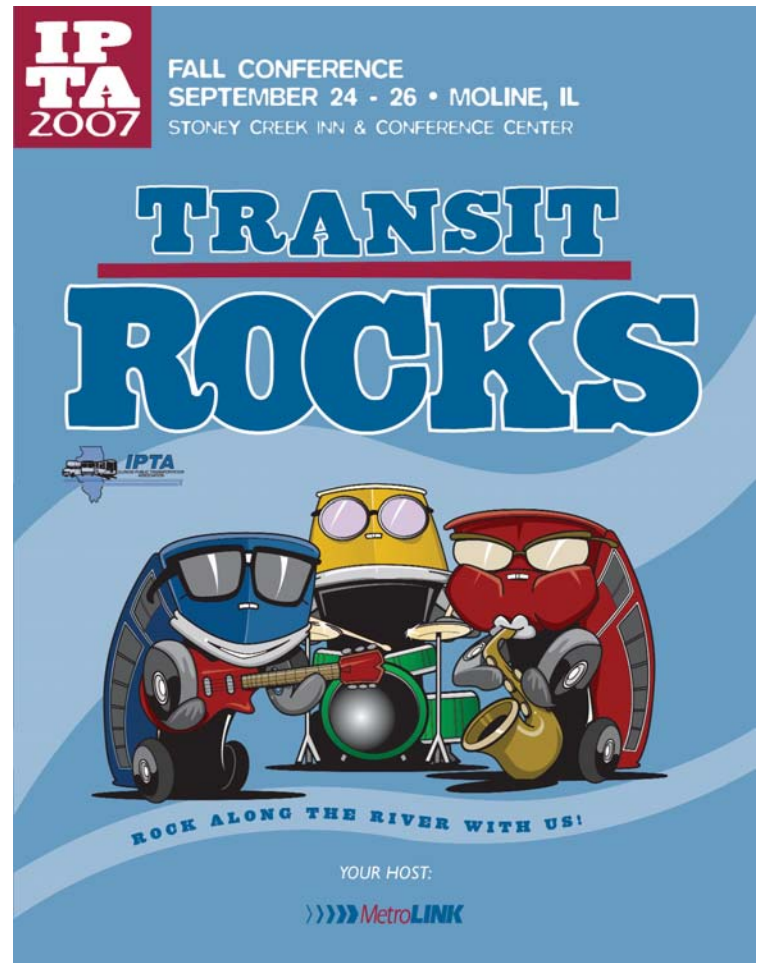
### TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 25

General Sessions begin and will feature topics such as Total Quality Management, Public Private Partnerships, Safety and Security and updates from IDOT and FTA. The Vendor Showcase will take place from 2pm – 5pm.

### WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 26

Employee of the Year and Legislator of the Year.

*For additional information and conference brochure, contact Linda Podeschi at 217.522.4782. Registration forms are also available on line at [www.ipta-net.org](http://www.ipta-net.org).*



## Transit Tidbits...

- There are more than 6,400 providers of public and community transportation offering Americans the opportunity and the choice to travel by means other than a car.
- Every \$10 million invested in public transportation saves more than \$15 million in transportation costs, for both highway and transit users.
- From 1995 through 2006, public transportation ridership increased by 30 percent, a growth rate higher than the 12 percent increase in US population and higher than the 24 percent growth in use of the nation's highways over the same period.
- Without public transportation, nationwide travel delays would have increased by 27 percent, costing residents in 85 urban areas an additional \$18 billion in lost time.
- Americans living in areas served by public transportation save \$18 billion annually in congestion costs.

## DPIT EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



Kudos to **Mike Garcia, Chief, Rail Engineering** in the Division's Bureau of Railroads, on his nomination and acceptance as **Vice President-Engineering Services** on the Board of Directors of the **American Railway Engineering & Maintenance of Way Association (AREMA)**. AREMA is the lead Railroad Engineering association in North America. In this new capacity, Mr. Garcia occupies the highest position allowed by a non-railroad employee. The installation of the new Board of Directors will occur at the AREMA annual conference September 12th, in Chicago. *Congratulations Mike!*

## DOWNSTATE DAY AT CHICAGO UNION STATION

Thirteen downstate Amtrak communities, two regional tourism agencies, one state university and several local businesses participated in the sixth annual **Downstate Illinois Day** on May 3, 2007. The event, which is sponsored by **IDOT's Bureau of Railroads** and **Amtrak**, featured community information, displays and literature distributed in the Great Hall of Amtrak's Chicago Union Station. Commuters and other visitors passing through the station were invited to collect travel information and register for local prizes and free Amtrak trips to downstate destinations. A live remote broadcast was hosted by Dick Biondi from Radio 94.7 Chicago's True Oldies Station. It is estimated that nearly 30,000 people visited the exhibits. Thanks for your support and we look forward to seeing you all at Downstate Day next year!



## BRIGHTON PARK INTERLOCKING REHABBED AND MODERNIZED!

By George Weber

Until its recent makeover, Brighton Park was the only manned, unsignaled railroad junction in Chicago, Illinois. More than 70 trains pass through this junction daily, all of which upon entering this crossing had to come to a complete stop before proceeding across the 'diamond' (rail-to-rail crossing). Once given the go-ahead to move forward, trains could only do so at only 10 mph or less.

Completion of the \$8.8 million project, now allows trains to proceed over the newly designed diamond at 30 mph. That's an improvement! Modernizing this interlocking will reduce rail traffic congestion delays affecting Amtrak, Metra's Heritage Corridor, as well as freight train operations. **DPIT's Bureau of Railroads** contributed \$1.5 million to the project through the **Rail Freight Program**.

While Brighton Park was not of the projects slated to receive funding for nationally recognized **Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency (CREATE)** program, its modernization serves as the foundation for continued rail infrastructure improvements in the region. The CREATE program is a historic \$1.5 billion rail infrastructure upgrade that will improve passenger and freight rail service, reduce motorist delays, increase safety, improve air quality, and create jobs.

For more information, visit [www.createprogram.org](http://www.createprogram.org) or contact Larry Wilson at 312-793-3507.



## EXAMINING THE POSSIBILITIES COMMUTER TRANSIT BETWEEN CHICAGO AND KANKAKEE

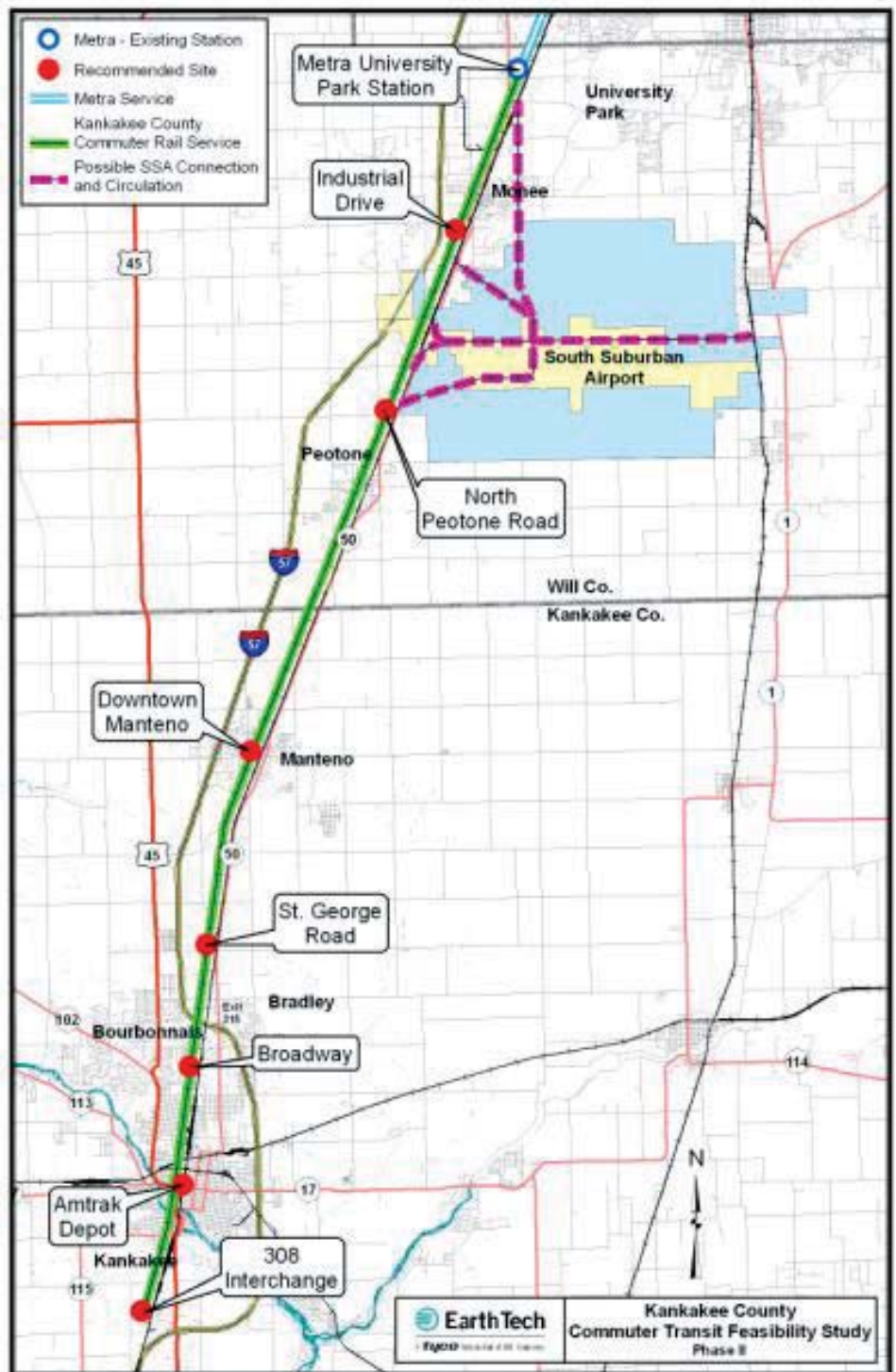
By Amy Welk

In 2004, Kankakee County conducted a **Phase I Feasibility Study** to determine if commuter rail service could be extended south from Metra's Electric District (MED), which begins at Chicago's Millennium Station, (formerly called the Randolph/South Water Street Station), and runs south to its terminus at University Park. The study determined that an independent commuter rail service from University Park through Kankakee County is indeed feasible, and that the service extension would benefit the economic growth and development of the Will and Kankakee County Region. Passengers would transfer between trains of the new Kankakee service and the MED by using a common platform at the current University Park Station.

In July, 2006, the **Kankakee County Commuter Transit Task Force (KACOT)** comprised of: Aroma Park, Bourbonnais, Bradley, IDOT, the City of Kankakee, Kankakee County, Manteno, Monee, Peotone, and Will County, hired the consulting firm Earth Tech, and launched the **Kankakee County Commuter Transit Phase II (KACOT-II) Feasibility Study**.

The study, which is planned to be completed later this fall, has introduced the concept of bus rapid transit (BRT) for the corridor and will support Kankakee County's application for the funding of a detailed Alternatives Analysis. An Alternatives Analysis is the first step of the **Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's)** formal "New Starts" transit study process. The multiple steps of the process could take 8 to 10 years before the planned service would be built and ready for operation.

*Both the Phase I final report and the Phase II draft final report are available for download on the KACOT project website at: [www.kacotstudy.com/resources.php](http://www.kacotstudy.com/resources.php)*

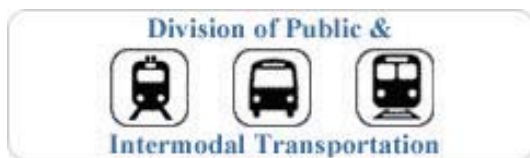


## ALL ABOUT THE DIVISION OF PUBLIC AND INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION...

The Division of Public and Intermodal Transportation is one of four modal divisions at IDOT (Aeronautics, Highways, and Traffic Safety make-up the other three). The Division aims to enhance Illinois' transportation network and ensure that it is intermodal, interconnected, provides mobility options and supports the efficient movement of both people and goods. More about DPIT (we pronounce this acronym as DIP -IT) is below:

**Mission:** To support public and specialized transportation throughout Illinois by providing technical support and financial resources to local governments, public and specialized transportation operators, and rail operators. The Division's main roles are to:

- Develop and recommend policies and programs;
- Implement and administer operating, capital, and technical assistance programs;
- Coordinate and participate in statewide planning and programming activities;
- Conduct technical studies and engineering reviews of public transportation, rail freight projects and planning studies;
- Maximize the amount of federal funds received in Illinois for transit and rail projects; and
- Advocate for public and specialized transportation funding within IDOT.



The following functions are performed within the Division:

### Administrative Support

Provides financial and administrative support for the Division, maintains the Division's operating budget, provides accounting assistance for Division programs, and is responsible for financial compliance reviews and human resources.

### Downstate Area Programs

Evaluates and administers capital and operating grant programs for downstate urban and rural transit systems; and administers the Statewide Consolidated Vehicle Procurement Program.

### Northeastern Illinois Area Programs

Evaluates and administers capital and operating grant programs in northeastern Illinois for the Regional Transportation Authority, Chicago Transit Authority, City of Chicago, Metra, Pace, and suburban municipalities.

### Program Support

Represents the Division in regional and statewide planning and engineering efforts; conducts engineering reviews, detailed evaluations, analyses of public transportation and multi-modal projects, and performs special public transportation planning studies.

### Railroads

Administers the State's freight and passenger rail programs, including funding for freight, passenger rail and high speed rail capital projects and operating assistance for supplemental Amtrak service.

For more information on DPIT, visit us online at  
[www.dot.il.gov/dpit/index.html](http://www.dot.il.gov/dpit/index.html)





# Illinois Department of Transportation

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## News you can use...

### ILLINOIS JOINS MIDWEST INTERSTATE RAIL COMPACT

In January of this year Governor Blagojevich signed legislation to add Illinois to the **Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact (MIPRC)**, a regional association of member states that promotes the development of intercity rail. The MIPRC has been a leading voice for passenger rail improvements in the Midwest since 2000. Twelve states are eligible to join the Compact, and, to date, nine have done so including **Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota** and **Ohio**. Additionally, legislation allowing Wisconsin to join is currently pending in their legislature. Each member state is allotted four commission seats: one for the Governor or his representative, one each for the state Senate and House of Representatives and one for a private sector representative. Illinois has seated two Commissioners: **State Representative Elaine Nekritz (D-District 57)** and **David Gross of Southern Illinois University**.

Recently, Rep. Nekritz joined MIPRC chairman, Bob Jackman from Indiana, to testify before the U.S. House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials at a hearing on the benefits of intercity passenger rail.

*For more information or to contact the MIPRC, visit [www.miprc.org](http://www.miprc.org).*

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