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New Jersey Community Transportation Training Program

New Jersey Bans Cell Phone Use by Transportation Operators

In late January 2011, Governor Christie signed into law legislation that prohibits public transportation operators from using a wireless telephone or electronic communication device while their trains, buses or cars are moving.

The law stems from a September 2008 train crash in Chatsworth, California where a crowded Metrolink commuter train collided head-on into a Union Pacific freight locomotive, killing 25 people. Cell phone records showed that the train driver was sending and receiving text messages in the seconds before the crash, which was the worst in the Unites States in 15 years.

Under the bill (A-407), approved 75-0 by the Assembly in February 2010, use of a wireless telephone or electronic communication device

includes, but is not limited to, talking or listening to another person on the telephone, text messaging or sending an electronic message via a wireless telephone or electronic communication device. However, an operator of a moving public transportation vehicle would be allowed to use a wireless telephone or electronic communication device in the event of an emergency or when radio communication failure occurs.

New Jersey had previously banned the use of hand-held cell phones by individual motorists while driving; this new law takes aim at those operating moving trains or buses for transportation companies large and small. A violation of this new law will be considered a disorderly persons offense punishable by a fine of up to \$1,000, six months imprisonment or both.

In January, Assemblyman Patrick J. Diegnan (D-Middlesex), a co-sponsor of bill, told The Jersey Journal "Some people have become so addicted to their electronic devises that they put others in danger without even thinking about the consequences. It's unfortunate that we even have to consider a bill like this, but history tells us it's a real risk."

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The New Jersey Community Transportation Training Program is operated by New Jersey Transit and funded by federal grants and State of New Jersey Casino Revenue funds. The program is administered by the National Transit Institute at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.



Ocean County's Rich Pinho Retires

Rich Pinho began his career with Ocean County in 1985 to assist in managing the County Transportation Department, originally known as the OCAT and OCHETS transportation system. Rich served in various positions with the Department culminating as Division Director, Operations.

Throughout his career, Richard Pinho held a CDL license and earned certification from CTAA as a VMMI (Vehicle Maintenance Management Inspector). He served on various advisory committees, helped to plan and organize many NJ COST Rodeos and also participated in numerous CTAA rodeo events.

Rich has contributed to the growth and expansion of the Ocean Ride system, as recognized through state and national awards: by the New Jersey Council on Special Transportation in 2000 and 2007 for Outstanding Paratransit System of the Year, and by the Federal Transit Administration in 2002.

We congratulate Rich and thank him for his service and dedication and wish him all the best!



Monmouth County's Henry Nicholson Retires

Henry Nicholson began his career in the United States Air Force, where he held assignments in Alaska and Korea before completing his service as the Deputy Chief of Resource Plans, where he established the operation of Goose Bay Airport Labrador by contract operation. After the Air Force, Mr. Nicholson became Chief Planner with the Atlantic County Transportation Authority at the beginning of the casino era, where he designed bus management and coordinated routes and parking. From there, Mr. Nicholson went on to work for Monmouth County, originally as a shared resource between the Planning and Transportation Departments, where he helped successfully complete audits and worked on innovations to the SCAT program. When the previous Director of what had been the Department of Transportation left to pursue other interests, Mr. Nicholson

became the Director of the Division of Transportation, renamed after a County reorganization.

At the Monmouth County Division of Transportation (MCDOT) Mr. Nicholson oversaw many improvements in technology and innovations, including the installation of the first diesel fleet, a fully accessible fleet, a fully automated computer scheduling system, the highest fare box recovery and the first totally integrated community transportation program.

Mr. Nicholson worked throughout his career to promote the importance of transportation in the lives of residents and worked towards flexible, efficient, and creative solutions. We congratulate him on his retirement and wish him all the best!

Paratransit Organization an Important Link to NJ TRANSIT

NJ TRANSIT Executive Director James Weinstein was the keynote speaker at the 15th Annual New Jersey Council on Special Transportation (COST) Vendor Expo in September.

COST is an organization made up of county, municipal and nonprofit agencies that coordinate and provide transportation for seniors, people with disabilities, and low income residents around the state. COST hosted their annual expo at the PNC Bank Arts Center Reception Center in Holmdel, offering paratransit workshops on funding and equipment, and recognizing many of their members for outstanding service to the community.

"Agencies like those involved with COST play an integral role in the state's overall transportation network," said Executive Director Weinstein. "Community-based transportation programs run by COST members are an ex-

tension of NJ TRANSIT services, enabling thousands of seniors, customers with disabilities and economically disadvantaged commuters to travel more easily around the state."

"All 21 counties, as well as many municipalities and private, nonprofit agencies receive grant funding and vehicles through NJ TRANSIT," said Director of Local Programs & Minibus Support Robert Koska. "These programs are administered by Program Director of Research & Community Services Marianne Stock and the Local Programs & Minibus Support staff."

Mr. Weinstein also recognized past COST President Michael Vieria and new COST President John Adair for their outstanding contributions to the organization.

"COST does a wonderful job educating and supporting the majority of specialized and community transit operations in the State of New Jersey," said Director of ADA Services Ronnie Siriani. "They are all vital partners, providing community and specialized transportation services for older Americans, persons with disabilities, low-income, and other transportation-disadvantaged people."

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The New Jersey Council on Special Transportation (COST) presented their yearly recognition awards at their annual COST Vendor Expo held at the PNC Bank Arts Center in Holmdel, New Jersey.

Pictured left to right: Carol Novrit representing Sussex County, 2010 Outstanding System of the Year; David Flippen, Sen-HanTransit Camden County, 2010 Driver of the Year; Helen Kirsch, Union County, 2010 Administrative Employee of the Year; John Adair, COST President; James Artfitch, Somerset County, 2010 Dispatcher of the Year; Joseph Haligowski, Union County, 2010 Maintenance Employee of the Year; Special recognition was also made to David Smith (photo at right) from Cape May County as the 2010 National Paratransit Rodeo Champion.



Somerset County Launches CAT-2R Shuttle

Somerset County Transportation recently launched a new shuttle service called CAT-2R. The route selected for this shuttle provides more transportation options for seniors, people with disabilities and the general public by connecting Bedminster, Bridgewater, Somerville, Raritan and Branchburg, including service to Raritan Valley Community College. Additional stops include multiple senior communities, Branchburg Shoprite, Raritan Shopping Mall, Commons Malls and other destinations. Route deviation up to 3/4 of a mile is available upon request; this is offered to customers who cannot navigate to the pick-up or drop-off locations. This service will be partially funded by the State of New Jersey Senior Citizens and Disabled Residence Transportation Assistance Program (SCDRTAP) funds administered by NJ Transit.



Somerset County Freeholder Patrick Scaglione, county Transportation liaison, cuts the ribbon to launch the CAT-2R bus service. Joining him, from left to right, are Somerset County Business Partnership President Michael Kerwin, RideWise Executive Director Donna Allison, Bridgewater Mayor Patricia Flannery, Freeholder Peter S. Palmer, Raritan Mayor JoAnn Liptak, Bridgewater Council President Matthew Moench, Freeholder Patricia Walsh, RVCC President Dr. Casey Crabbill, Senator Christopher Bateman, Bridgewater Councilman Howard Norgalis, Casino Tax Advisory Committee Chair Marion Rochford, Freeholder Director Jack Ciattarelli and his son Matthew.



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