

ALASKA MOBILITY COALITION

2007 - 2008



ANNUAL REPORT





FROM THE DRIVER'S SEAT A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Transit Advocate:

As executive director for the Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC), I thank you for your interest and support of community transportation in Alaska.

The 2007 – 2008 fiscal year was a busy one for AMC. It kicked off with the 2007 Alaska Transit Conference, held September 24 – 27 in Fairbanks. This annual conference, held in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation (AKDOT), provides the opportunity to discuss important state and federal transportation issues. We are looking forward to our 2008 conference, scheduled for October 13 – 15 in Anchorage.

Throughout the year, AMC continued our monthly teleconferences, which allows our members to share transportation-related information from around the state. Our member-directed committees also completed some exciting projects, including a statewide survey of maintenance needs, a regional wheelchair lift repair class and Web seminars for transit systems, among others.

We also made some impressive progress in the area of federal and state advocacy. For example, we worked with the Alaska congressional

delegation to obtain \$367,000 in federal funds for capital transit projects, and were successful in partnering with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and the AKDOT to obtain \$1.1 million in state funding for capital and operating assistance for Alaska transit systems. While AMC was less fortunate in our request for state assistance to offset the high price of fuel, we will continue our efforts in this area.

As you can see, 2007 – 2008 was an exciting year for AMC, and big plans are already in place for 2008 – 2009, including a statewide campaign to raise the awareness of community transportation, and work on two contracts awarded to AMC by the AKDOT. I invite you to read more about our past and future activities and efforts later in this report.

Thank you again for your interest and support of AMC and community transportation in Alaska.

- David M. Levy
Executive Director
Alaska Mobility Coalition

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear AMC Supporter:

2007 – 2008 has been a year of transition for the Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC). From hiring new staff, establishing an Anchorage office, organizing training seminars for transit systems across the state and successfully advocating for transit funding in Juneau and Washington, D.C., AMC has reestablished itself as the leading advocate for community transportation in Alaska.

As AMC is a small organization with only one paid staff position, I deeply appreciate the support of the volunteers from around the state who assist our executive director and board in advocating for transportation needs across the state. Volunteers help in so many ways – serving on AMC committees, advocating for transit needs in their local communities and across the state, and finding new members and new resources for AMC. Thank you to each of the 50 members and organizations that assist and support AMC.

2008 – 2009 looks like it will be an exciting year, as well. On a federal level, we will have a new administration in Washington, D.C. and

the reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users). Alaska has benefited greatly from the last transportation bill reauthorization, and I encourage our membership to give us your ideas and suggestions on what transit services should look like in Alaska and in the United States over the next five years.

Thanks again for your support of AMC, and I look forward to seeing you at the AMC annual meeting on October 13 in Anchorage!

- Jennifer Beckmann
President
AMC Board of Directors





THE REARVIEW MIRROR: OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

From conferences to surveys, and Web seminars to advocacy efforts, Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC) had a busy and productive year. Here's an overview of our activities and efforts.

2007 ALASKA TRANSIT CONFERENCE

The 2007 Alaska Transit Conference, held in partnership with the Alaska Department of Transportation (AKDOT), took place in Fairbanks on September 24 – 27. The annual conference featured Jeff Ottesen of the AKDOT, and Amy Changchien and Kelly Shawn of the Federal Transit Administration, who presented on state and federal transportation topics. Conference attendees also received an update on state transit issues from Commissioner Leo Von Scheben, and participated in a discussion on Alaska vehicle insurance with Linda Hall from the Alaska Commission of Insurance and Walt Diangson from the Community Transportation Association of America.

AMC COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

The AMC vehicle maintenance committee developed and administered a statewide survey of maintenance needs, and jointly sponsored a regional wheelchair lift repair class with the AKDOT. Meanwhile, the transit technology committee sponsored Web seminars on new technology for Alaska transit systems, and assisted the National Rural Information Technology Service Conference planners with conference panels.

FEDERAL AND STATE ADVOCACY

AMC was successful in working with the Alaska congressional delegation to obtain \$367,000 in federal funds for capital transit projects in the state. With this funding, AMC plans to partner with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AKMHTA) and the AKDOT on future transit projects across Alaska.

AMC also collaborated with the AKMHTA, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and the AKDOT to receive \$1.1 million in state funding for capital and operating assistance for Alaska transit systems. This marks the first time AMC has been successful in obtaining state funds for community transportation.

In an effort to offset the high price of fuel, AMC also put in a request for state reimbursement to transit systems. The Alaska legislature added \$100,000 for fuel reimbursement into the FY 2009 budget, but Gov. Sarah Palin ultimately vetoed the expenditure.

NEW CONTRACTS

In spring 2008, AMC was awarded two contracts from the AKDOT – one to assist in planning the 2008 Transit Conference, which takes place October 13 – 15 in Anchorage, and one to develop a new site monitoring tool, which will be used to track the performance of rural transit systems across the state. AMC will continue working with the AKDOT to monitor the performance of capital transit throughout fall 2008.

ABOUT AMC

FOUNDED IN 2002, THE ALASKA MOBILITY COALITION (AMC) IS A PRIVATE, NONPROFIT, MEMBERSHIP ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS PUBLIC, PRIVATE, TRIBAL AND HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION AGENCIES AND TRANSIT ADVOCATES IN ALASKA. WE CURRENTLY HAVE 51 MEMBERS ACROSS THE STATE, FROM DELTA JUNCTION TO PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND, WHO PROVIDE MORE THAN 6.6 MILLION RIDES ANNUALLY FOR ALASKANS TO GET TO WORK, SCHOOL AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS.

OUR MISSION IS TO ACHIEVE MOBILITY THROUGH COMMUNITY-APPROPRIATE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES. WE WORK TOWARD THIS MISSION BY ADVOCATING IN JUNEAU AND WASHINGTON, D.C. FOR CAPITAL AND OPERATING FUNDING FOR ALASKA TRANSIT; PROMOTING SAFE AND COST-EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION THAT MEETS LOCAL, REGIONAL AND STATE NEEDS; AND PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE, COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION IN THE STATE.

TO LEARN MORE, VISIT WWW.ALASKAMOBILITY.ORG, CALL 907.240.2702 OR E-MAIL ALASKAMC@GMAIL.COM.



DENALI TRANSIT

Each year, hundreds of thousands of people visit Denali National Park and Preserve, creating a heavy volume of traffic that flows through the Nenana Canyon, an area just outside the park entrance.

Concerned by the growing traffic congestion, the park commissioned a feasibility study that looked at how to relieve some of the congestion, and how community transportation services could be extended into other areas of Denali Borough. Upon completion of the study, and after several meetings with interested stakeholders, Denali residents Neal Laugman and Julia Potter formed Denali Transit, a nonprofit management corporation, to implement a community transportation system based on the study's findings.

"Our primary objectives are to enhance the visitor experience, promote safety and create a viable option for transportation throughout the community," said Potter, who added they are still in the planning stages.

Potter said the project is an incredible opportunity to improve the visitor experience and give residents a way to help keep Alaska beautiful and unspoiled. However, the project isn't without its challenges. Among them, Potter said, is obtaining necessary state and federal support, and getting people to understand why community transportation is important.

The Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC) is proving to be a beneficial ally for Denali Transit, which has been an AMC member for one year.

"AMC is a super source of information for funding resources, federal requirements, training opportunities, and transportation plans from other small communities," Potter said.





FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

The Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) is home to Fairbanks – Alaska’s second largest city – North Pole and several other smaller communities. To meet the needs of its residents, the FNSB transportation department operates the Metropolitan Area Commuter System (MACS) and the Van Tran paratransit service, as well as provides primary support for the Coordinated Transportation System.

As a transit provider in Interior Alaska, the FNSB transportation department faces with some unique challenges, such as long winters when temperatures can drop to -60 degrees. It also shares the common transit provider challenge of higher costs, increased demand and limited funding. While acknowledging the challenge, FNSB transportation manager David Leone also sees it as an opportunity.

“Higher fuel costs are forcing more people to reconsider their transportation practices. This places our bus system in a key position to meet the growing demand,” he said. “Higher energy costs are affecting everyone. As the state grapples with an energy policy, mass transit can become a key piece of that policy.”

FNSB joined the Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC) in 2004 to keep abreast of transportation issues, share experiences with other

members and promote transportation as a key element to economic development.

“AMC membership provides us with close ties around the state and keeps borough transportation up-to-date with what other providers are facing and ideas for improving our local transportation services. AMC has become an important voice in state and federal legislative efforts to promote sustainable mobility services,” said Leone, who also serves as an AMC board member.



SITKA TRIBE OF ALASKA

When Sitka residents need to get somewhere, they can rely on Sitka Community RIDE, a fixed-route public transit system that is part of a coordinated transportation service under Center for Community. The program is operated by Sitka Tribe of Alaska (STA), the federally recognized tribal government of the Sheet'ka area in Southeast Alaska.

Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. – 6:30 p.m., Community RIDE offers curb-to-curb service throughout the community to children, adults and seniors. All vehicles are equipped with wheelchair lift capabilities. In addition to contract funds for two routes, STA was also a successful grant recipient of tribal transit funds, which allowed them to add one additional route.

STA transportation manager Gerry Hope said the biggest problem facing fixed-route public transit providers today is getting financial support from local and state government to sustain operations.

“With the high cost of fuel, more and more strain is put on public transportation in Alaska, with very little extra funding, if any,” he said. “This needs to be turned around, so public transit providers can respond in an appropriate manner when there is increased ridership and strain on public transit systems, as is the case now.”

One of the benefits of Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC) membership is the opportunity to discuss issues like this with other members, Hope said. “The teleconferences and meetings help immensely by being able to share problems and successes with like-minded public transit providers in Alaska,” he said.

Since joining AMC a year ago, Hope said STA has enjoyed many other benefits, such as receiving public transit funding information, getting weekly e-mails on public transit policy information, and participating in a collaborative pilot project, which provided STA with a “traveling mechanic” for two days in May 2008.





SENIOR CITIZENS OF KODIAK

Serving meals. Running an adult day program. Supporting family caregivers. Offering senior in-home services. Promoting health education. Providing transportation. These are just a few of the services offered by Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc. (SCOK), a nonprofit organization that provides services to Kodiak Island residents 60 and older so they may live longer with independence, honor and dignity.

As part of its mission, SCOK is the lead agency for the Kodiak Area Transit System (KATS), a coordinated transportation service serving the clients of 14 local nonprofits. For just \$2, riders can be transported to medical and dental appointments, jobs, training, shopping or even social events.

According to Patricia Branson, executive director of SCOK, the biggest challenge facing transit providers is meeting the escalating costs and increased demands.

“Everyone wants to ride the bus these days, but in order to meet these increased needs, the state and local municipalities need to incorporate transit funding into budgets,” she said.

Overcoming challenges like this is one reason SCOK has chosen to be a member of the Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC).

“SCOK believes that advocating with other agencies across the state for needed services is essential in successfully meeting those needs,” Branson said. “By working together, more benefits will come to the transit providers and, more importantly, their users.”

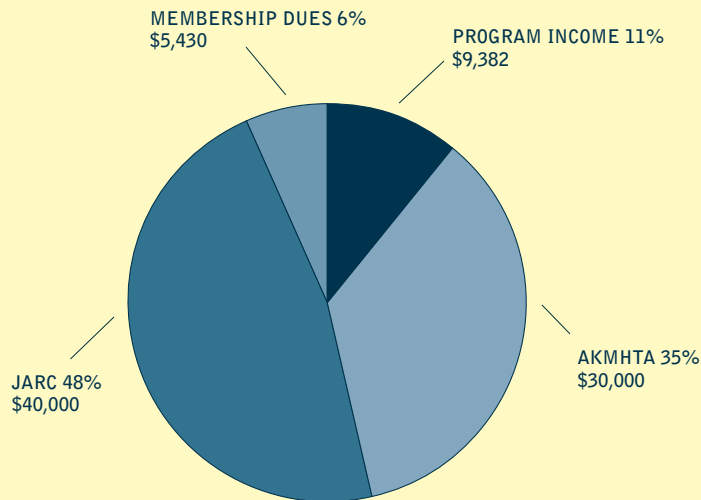




2007 – 2008 FINANCIALS

The following graph illustrates Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC) funding sources for 2007 – 2008. A description of those funding sources is also included.

AMC BUDGET 2007 - 2008



JOB ACCESS REVERSE COMMUTE/FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

AMC receives Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) funds from the Federal Transit Administration through the Alaska Department of Transportation (AKDOT) to promote information and outreach on work-related transit issues in Alaska.

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AKMHTA) provides a local match to the JARC funds. This match enables AMC to expand its transit outreach and information services across Alaska.

PROGRAM INCOME

AMC contracts with the AKDOT to organize an annual statewide transit conference and develop a statewide performance evaluation tool for rural Alaska transit systems. In 2007, AMC also worked with the AKDOT on a vehicle inventory system.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

AMC is a statewide membership organization. In 2007 – 2008, AMC had 39 dues-paying members in Alaska and the lower 48.

THANK YOU

Alaska Mobility Coalition (AMC) extends gratitude to our generous funders, as well as our membership and board of directors. Thank you for your ongoing support.

MAJOR FUNDERS

Federal Transit Administration
Alaska Department of Transportation
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

2007 – 2008 AMC MEMBERS

Municipality of Anchorage/People Mover
Central Area Rural Transit/Soldotna
Alaska Department of Transportation
Fairbanks North Star Borough/MAC
Transit
Southeast Senior Services/Juneau
Center for Community/Sitka
City and Borough of Juneau/Capital Transit
Alaska State Independent Living Council
MASCOT Transit/Mat-Su Valley

Governor's Council on Disabilities and
Special Education
Fairbanks Resource Agency
Access Alaska
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Ketchikan Gateway Borough/The Bus
Pacific Shore Insurance Services
Glacier Valley Transit/Girdwood
Senior Citizens of Kodiak
Cooper River Native Association
Brooks and Associates
Southeast Alaska Independent Living
Alaska Center for Blind Adults
Chickaloon Tribal Council
Sitka Tribe of Alaska
David Levy
Wasilla Physical Therapy
Disability Law Center
AARP
Mabel T. Caverly Center
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