

IATR Conference Presentation Highlights Opportunities to Expand Mobility

By Dan Dalton, KFH Group

The recent 23th Annual International Association of Transportation Regulators (IATR) Conference offered an excellent opportunity to provide regulators and other participants with important information for expanding mobility in their communities. IATR is a professional association of municipal, county, state, country, provincial, or federal transportation regulators who are directly or indirectly responsible for the regulation of transportation industries. Potentially, transportation regulators can serve as the connection between private providers in their communities and the programs and services that are available to support their efforts to provide accessible transportation and expanded mobility.

PHOTO CREDIT: © 2010 IATR



Dan Dalton, KFH Group, made a presentation at the IATR Conference held in Chicago, IL.

IATR encourages close cooperation and sharing of information between the various entities represented and to work to resolve common problems. In line with this theme, IATR President Matthew Daus considered the conference the ideal setting to discuss resources that support private transportation operators and funding opportunities to expand accessible taxi services—particularly through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5317 (New Freedom) Program. With support from the TPLA cooperative agreement with FTA to provide technical assistance to private transportation providers, my presentation at the

conference included discussion of these resources and opportunities along with examples from across the country. The presentation included:

- A review of the various federal funding programs that offer opportunities for private transportation operators, especially through partnerships with transit providers and human service agencies. In addition to the New Freedom Program, these programs include the FTA Section 5310 (Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities) and Section 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute—JARC Programs).
- Discussion of potential opportunities for private provider participation, including involvement in the coordinated transportation planning process; the acquisition of accessible vehicles for use in taxi, ride-sharing, and vanpool programs; the provision of paratransit services beyond Americans with Disabilities (ADA) requirements; and involvement in taxi voucher programs.

Continued on page 18

IATR Conference Presentation Highlights Opportunities to Expand Mobility

Continued from page 10

- Examples of New Freedom Program grant awards to purchase and deploy accessible taxis. Efforts in Memphis, Tenn., Gardena, Cal., and Washington, D.C. were highlighted.
- Discussion of the reasons why private transportation operators may not be as involved in these programs as they could



TLPA President Victor Dizengoff was a speaker at the IATR conference.

be, including the planning process may seem convoluted and difficult for private operators to determine potential business opportunities; outreach to private operators may be lacking; and the need for stronger relationships between funding agencies and private operators.

The presentation also included discussion of TLPA resources that can assist private providers. As noted in previous editions of *Transportation Leader*, through the FTA-funded technical assistance TLPA offered eleven *Planning Ahead: Enhanced Contracting Opportunities By Participating in the Transportation Planning Process* seminars around the country. These seminars were designed to assist private transportation providers in understanding and benefiting from the transportation planning process at the state, regional and local levels. Along with TLPA Executive Vice President Harold Morgan, as well as Ken Hosen of KFH Group and Joe Rubino of J.M. Rubino Transit Consulting, I had the opportunity to conduct these seminars. The last seminar was videotaped, and modules will be available on the TLPA Website in the near future.

An additional resource was highlighted during the IATR presentation. As a follow-up to the Planning Ahead seminar series, a guidebook is under development that will include key components from the seminar presentation and manual. *Private Operators at the Table: A Guide to Participating in the Transportation Process* will serve as a valuable tool for private transportation providers unable to attend one of the seminars, as well as a useful follow-up resource for seminar participants. A final draft of the guidebook is currently under review by FTA, and a final ver-

sion will be available in the near future. Check out the TLPA Website and future editions of *Transportation Leader* for more information.

The IATR presentation concluded with simple, but an important question to the conference participants—*So, What's This All Mean to Their Communities?* The answer included:

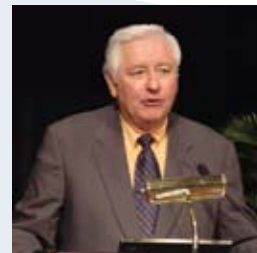
- Additional transportation resources for residents and visitors,
- Benefits for business, tourism, and attracting conventions,
- Expanded opportunities for local taxi companies,
- A better link between public transit and private transportation operators,
- More efficient use of federal funds and taxpayer dollars.

Lastly, the presentation included a “call for action” to the conference participants when they returned to their communities. Their role could involve:

- Directing private operators toward the TLPA resources,
- Encouraging the use of New Freedom and other program funds to expand accessible taxi services,
- Helping identify public policies that can help provide incentives for accessible taxi services,
- Assisting with data collection of accessible taxi programs,
- Participating in outreach that helps educate the community on the need for accessible services.

Maybe because football season is upon us I instinctively connect expanding mobility in our communities to a team concept. Like in football, when in it comes to this effort we are all in it together, we should all be on the same page, and we should support one other. Hopefully the funding program information presented at the IATR conference and the resources provided will help in the team efforts to expand transportation options in our communities.

Visit the IATR web site (<http://www.iatr.org/conference.html>) for more information. ■



Dr. Ray Mundy was also a speaker at the IATR conference.