Votran hosts 2001 Florida Bus Roadeo

The 2001 Florida Bus Maintenance and Operations Roadeo was held on May 18-19, 2001, in Daytona Beach. Sponsored annually by the Florida Department of Transportation and the Florida Public Transportation Association and hosted this year by VOTRAN, Volusia County’s transit agency, this event is the high point of the year for those involved in the competition. This year, transit technicians and bus operators from properties around the state converged on Daytona Beach to compete for the coveted awards.

The event began on Friday, when participants were given the opportunity to practice at the event site, the Daytona Speedway, in preparation for Saturday’s competition. In addition, a written test for participants was administered. On Saturday, as the sun rose over the Atlantic Ocean, competitors made their way to the Speedway.

The riveting (no pun intended) intensity of the maintenance technician competition was equally matched with the ardent rivalry of the bus operator competition. All competitors, both technicians and operators, gave it their all and displayed exceptional performances.

On Saturday night, participants gathered at a banquet to recognize each competitor and the winners, including the Grand Champion Team.

And the winner is . . . Broward, Broward, Broward!

Participants from Broward County Transit excelled in all areas of competition and were awarded first prize for both the Maintenance and Bus Operator competitions. They were also named the Grand Champion Team of the competition. The overall winners in both Maintenance and Operations represented Florida at the

Farmer named Mechanic of the Year 2000

Dwight Farmer was named the 2000 Florida Public Transportation Association’s (FPTA) Mechanic of the Year at the 26th Annual FPTA Conference in October. Dwight is a senior member of the Gainesville Regional Transit System maintenance staff and has served in that capacity for more than 18 years. His nomination was

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For more information, please contact Vicki Zambito, at (813) 974-9763, zambito@cutr.usf.edu.

**Maintenance Competition**

*1st Place—Broward County Transit*
(l to r) John Kindle, Sami Itayim, Thomas Vanstrander.

*2nd Place—LYNX (Orlando)*
(l to r) Will Porras, Luis Rivera, Jerry Jenkins

*3rd Place—Miami-Dade*
(l to r) Allen Hall, Eddie Cortez, Mike Perez

**Operator Competition**

*1st Place—Driving Event*
Rendol Whidden, Broward County Transit

*1st Runner Up—Driving Event*
Dennis Collins, Jacksonville Transit Authority

*2nd Runner Up—Driving Event*
Moises Reina, LYNX

*3rd Runner Up—Driving Event*
Norman Miknyocki, LeeTran

**Transit Terrorism Resource Guide available**

USF’s National Center for Transit Research (NCTR) at CUTR at assembled this guide to assist agencies with developing counter- and anti-terrorism programs. The guide contains information on federal and State of Florida anti-terrorism resources for public transit agencies, resource documents to assist transit agencies with developing or enhancing security plans and procedures, and training programs and seminars on transit security and anti-terrorism. The guide is available [www.nctr.usf.edu](http://www.nctr.usf.edu).

**Transit Training** is a product of the Florida Maintenance Training Program, funded by the Florida Department of Transportation Public Transit Office Robert Westbrook 605 Suwannee Street, MS-26 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

For information contact: Ed Bart or Vicki Zambito Center for Urban Transportation Research University of South Florida 4202 E. Fowler Ave., CUT 100 Tampa, FL 33620-5375 (813) 974-3120, Fax (813) 974-5168

Lisa Staes, Editor

Visit us on-line at the FMTP website, [www.cutr.usf.edu/research/fmtp/fmtp.htm](http://www.cutr.usf.edu/research/fmtp/fmtp.htm)
Engine module coming soon to a location near you!

Isn’t it funny how sometimes the best ideas grow out of loud complaints?

Bob Westbrook, FDOT Transit Program Manager, has heard them all, statements like:

- “Small properties can’t compete at the roadeo.”
- “We don’t have access to the engine modules and the break boards like the big systems do.”
- “Why can’t we ever get hands-on training?”

Westbrook and some energetic folks at LYNX wiped away those excuses.

“I was looking for a way to even the playing field at the roadeos and provide more hands-on, on-site training. The folks at Gillig, Detroit Diesel, Allison Transmission, and LYNX helped make it a reality,” Westbrook said.

Donations and volunteers

Gillig Corporation donated a complete brake board assembly. Detroit Diesel and Allison Transmission donated the engine and transmission. There was just one catch. Westbrook didn’t have any place to assemble the engine. And, once assembled, how was he supposed to move the darn thing around the state?

Joe Saldana, LYNX Maintenance Director, stepped up with a solution. Saldana volunteered staff time, the assembly location, and additional parts to the effort. Staff time came in the form of Brian Ruppert, Jose LaRosa, and Chris Kemna.

Ruppert, LYNX Training Assistant, took the lead and was responsible for the majority of the assembly. Like all good mechanics, Ruppert started by completely stripping the engine down. Once apart, the LYNX body shop painted the engine and transmission. LaRosa fabricated the cabinet. Next, they put it all back together again.

Dale Smith, Palm Tran, donated the radiator. Ron Albright, PSTA, donated the DDEC and ATEC wire harnesses. Ruppert estimates it took about six months to complete the whole project.

Challenge accomplished

“It was a good kind of challenge,” Ruppert said. “When it’s completed, you crank it and it runs with no problems, you feel great.” In fact, the experience was so rewarding, he’s in the process of building another engine module for LYNX’s own in-house training.

“Without the help of Joe, Brian, and the rest of the folks at LYNX I’m not sure we would have ever got this running,” Westbrook said. “Now our technicians at the small transit properties will get a chance to train on the module.”

Vicki Zambito of CUTR will be scheduling the movement of the module from property to property. Ruppert is in the process of completing the loading/unloading procedures and PM schedule for the module.

That only leaves one question. What is the name of the FMTP traveling engine?

For more information, please contact Elizabeth Stutts, Grant Programs Administrator at FDOT, at (850) 414-4530, elizabeth.stutts@dot.state.fl.us.

Do you have any events or story ideas?

We are also seeking article submissions from technicians, trainers, and managers.

FAX: (813) 974-5168
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offered for his exceptional maintenance abilities, his role as a team leader and his model citizenry.

Dwight is considered by RTS staff to be an invaluable member of the maintenance department. He is identified as a team player with a “can do” attitude, enjoying a challenge and never faltering in his work ethic of never giving up and staying with a repair until completed. He serves as a mentor to his co-workers and is always willing to share his knowledge and assist them whenever and wherever needed.

Dwight is proficient in all aspects of transit bus repairs including engines, transmissions, wheelchair lifts, air conditioning, and electrical. In his 18 years with RTS, he has not had a reportable accident. He is an ASC Master Certified Mechanic in both heavy and medium duty trucks, school buses, and automobiles. It was noted by his supervisor at RTS, Patrick Batie, that he is particularly effective in multi-tasking, performing a number of activities simultaneously.

His list of awards and certifications is impressive, including an Associate of Science degree in Auto Mechanics from Santa Fe Community College, Multiple ASC certifications, and training certificates from General Motors, Detroit Diesel/Allison Transmission, and Thermo King.

In addition, he has been a regular participant in Florida Maintenance Training Program sponsored training.

In his spare time, Dwight completed volunteer firefighting training and now assists the community as a member of the Cross Creek Volunteer Fire Department.

**Congratulations Dwight!!**

For more information on the Mechanic of the Year program, including qualifications, deadlines, and nomination forms, please contact Wes Watson at FPTA, (850) 878-0855, or Robert Westbrook at FDOT, (850) 414-4500.

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**FREE TRAINING!**

Florida’s Maintenance Training Program Class Schedule

- **Dec. 17-21, 2001**
  - **Coach Air Systems**
  - Rick Schellenbach
  - HARTline, 8 am - 5 pm

- **Jan. 7-11, 2002**
  - **Foundation Brakes**
  - Rick Schellenbach
  - HARTline, 8 am - 5 pm

- **Jan. 21-25, 2002**
  - **Wheelchair Systems**
  - Rick Schellenbach
  - HARTline, 8 am - 5 pm

**Additional training courses are currently being scheduled and will be announced in the next issue of this newsletter.**

For more information, contact Vicki Zambito at (813) 974-9763, zambito@cutr.usf.edu.

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**Upcoming Events**

- **February 12 & 13, 2002**—**Technology in Transit**, CUTR, Tampa.
- **June 10-12, 2002**—**Florida Public Transportation Association Professional Development Workshop**, Embassy Suites Hotel at USF, Tampa. Watch your mail for additional information, or call Amber Reep at (813) 974-9823 or Lisa Staes at (813) 974-9787.
- **Bus Collision Prevention and Collision Seminar for Managers**, held in conjunction with the Florida Public Transportation Association (APTA)/CUTR Professional Development Workshop.
- **August 5-9, 2002**—**Florida Statewide Transit Training Program & Transportation Safety Institute: Transit System Safety**, CUTR, Tampa.

For additional information or to register for a class, contact Amber Reep at (813) 974-9823, reep@cutr.usf.edu.