

**SAFETEA-LU Regional Coordinated Public
Transit-Human
Services Transportation Plan
For RUSK County 2009-2014**



Prepared by the RUSK Transit Authority- Indianhead Transit Service

Introduction

In August of 2005, Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation, Equity Act: A legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), reauthorizing the surface transportation act. As part of this reauthorization, grantees under the New Freedom Initiative, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program (5310) were required to meet certain planning requirements in order to receive funding. Federal transit law requires that projects selected for funding under the various programs be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” and that the plan be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) in collaboration with a workgroup of Regional Planning Commission planners developed a new transportation coordination planning process for the 2008 update based on the final guidance on coordination from the Federal Law SAFETEA-LU. A regional transportation coordination plan will include assessments of available services, gaps in service and service needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. From the environmental scanning and assessment data, a transportation coordination plan with implementation strategies will be developed.

Coordination Planning Process

The 2008 coordination planning process was conducted regionally for Rusk, Sawyer and Washburn. The meeting was facilitated by staff from the Northwest Regional Planning Commission and a broad representation of interested political and consumer constituencies were invited. The resultant plan strategies suggested further planning on a county basis. Several of the strategies identified in this meeting indicated a need for further assessment of needs and planning for RUSK county consumers and providers.

Public Meeting

On August 14, 2009 a County-wide transportation coordination meeting was held in Ladysmith, Wisconsin. Meeting invitations were sent out to transportation providers, agencies and advocates in RUSK county and approximately 25 people attended the meeting and participated in the planning process. (See appendix A) A review of the previous planning and Coordination meeting coordination process was provided to participants as well as information on Rusk County demographics. The agenda included a presentation by Dave Lowe, of WisDot regarding and update on the State and Federal status of public transportation and various funding options available thru the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.

Demographic Information

An important component of the planning process is the analysis of the regions demographics and associated trends. The table below illustrates the gender by Age 65+ population and projects the future population out to the year 2030. As the information demonstrates, the regions Age 65+ population will increase by more than 80% by the year 2030. It is obvious

that such an increase will significantly increase the need for public transportation and further illustrates the need for a coordinated transportation system.

Final Population Projections for Wisconsin Counties by Age: 2000 - 2030
RUSK COUNTY

Age Group	Total						
	2000 Census	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
0-4	829	848	874	869	844	786	721
5-9	1,057	850	863	880	872	834	778
10-14	1,151	1,091	870	875	890	872	834
15-19	1,189	1,133	1,074	810	813	817	801
20-24	787	929	881	825	620	612	616
25-29	688	812	953	898	839	624	617
30-34	884	713	841	974	916	846	630
35-39	1,100	912	736	860	992	922	853
40-44	1,137	1,134	942	754	880	1,002	933
45-49	1,140	1,177	1,179	973	779	900	1,023
50-54	973	1,186	1,231	1,224	1,013	804	932
55-59	822	1,035	1,267	1,305	1,302	1,073	856
60-64	758	864	1,099	1,334	1,376	1,362	1,134
65-69	730	756	873	1,110	1,349	1,379	1,371
70-74	670	654	682	784	1,000	1,206	1,239
75-79	528	561	550	572	659	836	1,016
80-84	493	422	450	441	461	528	675
85-89	269	309	272	292	290	304	353
90-94	109	135	162	147	160	161	173
95-99	26	40	50	63	61	67	69
100 & Over	7	3	5	6	8	9	10
Totals	15,347	15,564	15,854	15,996	16,124	15,944	15,634

TABLE 1

The Elder Economic Security Standard Index is a scientific estimate of the amount of money required for elders in various circumstances (living single or married couples, owning, renting or with a mortgage) to live. For single elders in good health, the statewide Wisconsin Elder Economic Security Standard Index (Index) is \$18,158 (for homeowners without a mortgage) or \$19,298 (for renters). This represents the living expense costs (housing, health care, transportation, food and miscellaneous) for elders age 65+ in Wisconsin. The table below details the Index for Rusk county 65+ residents. Transportation costs are \$168 per month for individuals in good health. The Index indicates that a single elderly person in Rusk County will spend at a minimum of \$17,022 on yearly expenses. However the average Rusk county social security payment per individual (in 2008) was only \$11,623. The fact that a large percentage of 65+ in Rusk county live only on a social security income indicates a rather large discrepancy between the Standard Index needed to live and their income level. This data points dramatically to the need for transportation services for Rusk County.

Table D-56: The Elder Economic Security Standard Index for Rusk County, 2008

Monthly Expenses for Selected Household Types

Expenses/Monthly and Yearly Totals	Elder Person (age 65+)			Elder Couple (one or both age 65+)		
	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter, One Bedroom	Owner w/ Mortgage	Owner w/o Mortgage	Renter, One Bedroom	Owner w/ Mortgage
Housing (inc. utilities, taxes & insurance)	\$400	\$442	\$1,003	\$400	\$442	\$1,003
Food	\$226	\$226	\$226	\$416	\$416	\$416
Transportation	\$168	\$168	\$168	\$269	\$269	\$269
Health Care (Good Health)	\$387	\$387	\$387	\$775	\$775	\$775
Miscellaneous	\$236	\$236	\$236	\$372	\$372	\$372
Index Per Month	\$1,418	\$1,460	\$2,021	\$2,232	\$2,274	\$2,835
Index Per Year	\$17,022	\$17,524	\$24,256	\$26,788	\$27,290	\$34,023

Annual Comparison Amounts	Elder Person	Elder Couple
Federal Poverty Guideline 2008 (DHHS)	\$10,400	\$14,000
SSI Payment Maximum—WI 2008	\$8,649	\$13,057
Average County Social Security Payment 2008	\$11,623	\$18,969

TABLE 2

The economic downturn has had a devastating effect on the economy of Rusk County residents. Agricultural prices (dairy products) which have been trending downwards and an evaporating market for wood products such as window and doors has caused Rusk County to post the highest unemployment in the state of Wisconsin for several reporting periods this year. The lack of diversity in the manufacturing base has caused an unemployment rate that topped at nearly 17%. The percentage of individuals who qualify for free and reduced school lunches is often used as guideline for identifying poverty – particularly of children and families living in poverty. According to the Wisconsin Council of Children and Families (2006) Rusk County, with 50% of school aged children qualifying for reduced meals at school, significantly exceeds the Wisconsin average of 31%. Only Adams (54%), Milwaukee (56%) and Menominee Counties (81%) exceed Rusk County in this metric of child/family poverty. The recent economic downturn, since this data was reported, will only amplify this need with estimates for 2009 to be near 60% of children qualifying in Rusk County.

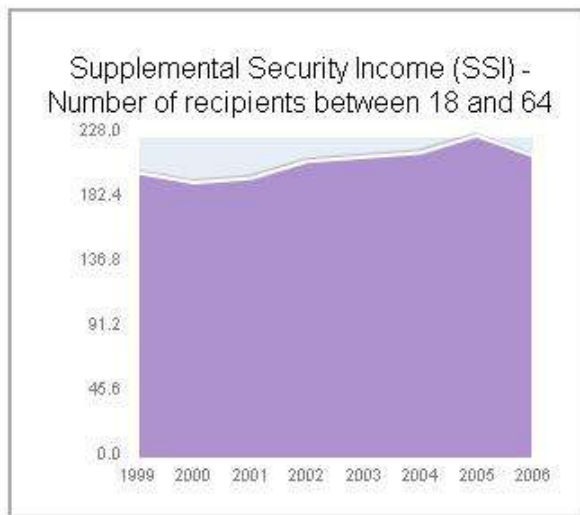
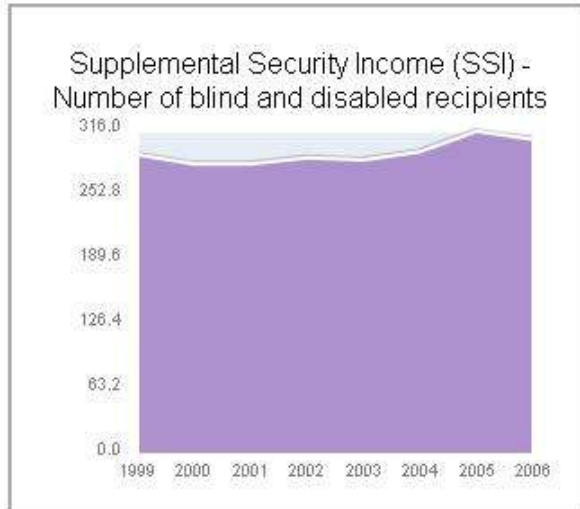


TABLE 3

There appears to be a significant need for specialized transportation and “independence mobility” for significant numbers of Rusk County residents as indicated by the information below. The information below indicates numbers of individuals with physical and mental and medical disabilities, many of whom, will need access to public transportation for their mobility needs.

- The tables above indicate the number of recipients of SSI in RUSK County is trending upward for total numbers between 18 and 64 years of age and by those individuals who are blind and disabled.
- Table 4 below indicates that in 2006 there were about 900 males and females from age 21 to 64 with employment disability who are living in Rusk County.

- Over 1,000 disabled residents, ages 21 to 75 (table 5) and over, who are capable of traveling outside the home live in Rusk County in 2006. Based on trends and other statistics, the current numbers have increased significantly.
- Table 6 below indicates that there were about 600 (age 15 and up) non-institutionalized mentally delayed individuals in Rusk County in 2006. Table 7 indicates nearly 1,400 residents of Rusk County are physically disabled

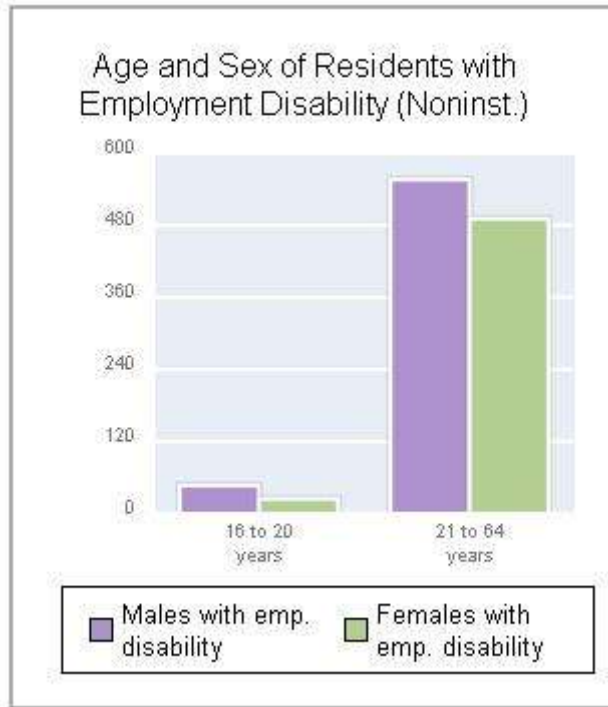


TABLE 4

Age and Sex of Go-Outside-Home Disabled Residents (Noninstitutionalized)

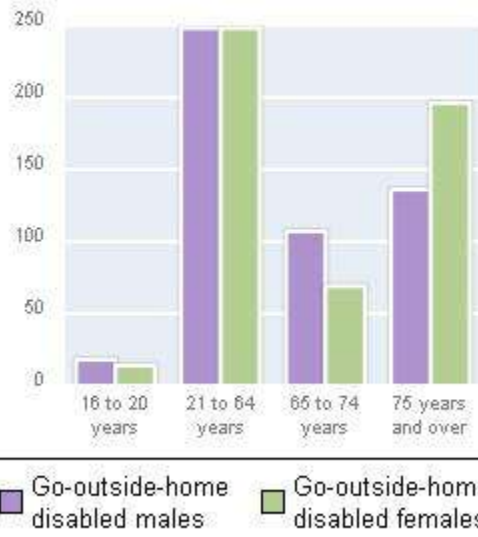


TABLE 5

Age and Sex of Mentally-Disabled Residents (Noninstitutionalized)

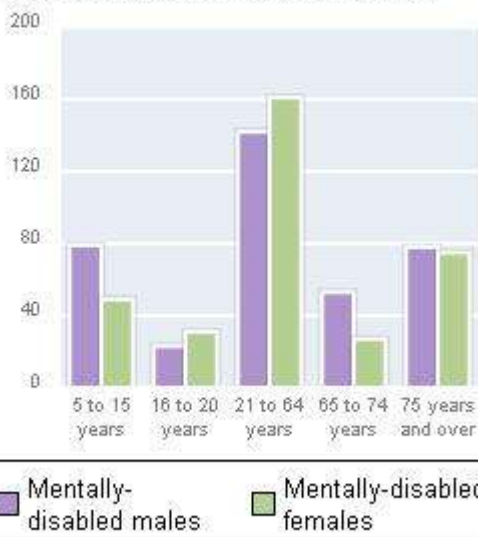


TABLE 6

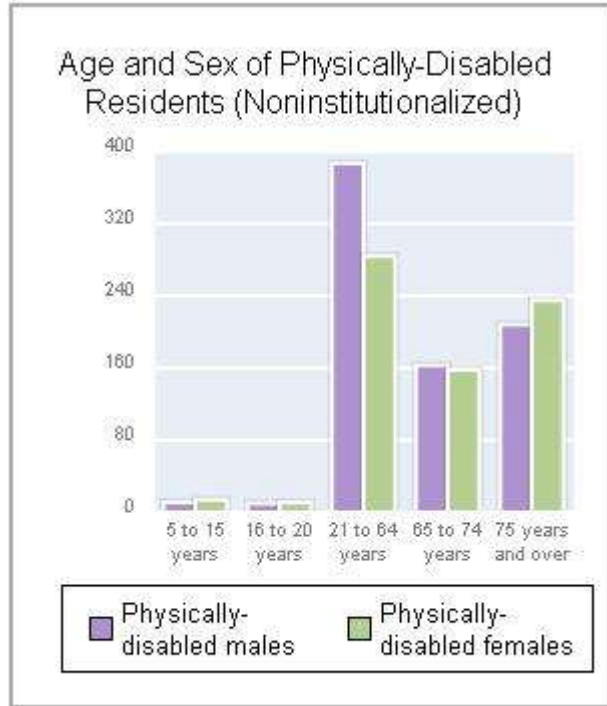


TABLE 7

Assessment of Available Services

A current list of available services and agencies that utilize transportation services in RUSK County was developed by the 2008 coordinated planning group was reviewed by the RUSK county planning group to determine if there was any need to add or to delete from the list. The final reviewed list of available services is contained in the appendix.

Identification and Analysis of Service Gaps and Service Needs

At the Rusk County regional transportation coordination meeting a general discussion among meeting participant's focused on identifying service gaps and needs. The gaps and needs identified were derived from the experiences of the meeting participants and from a review of demographic data for the region. A nominal group process was used to eliminate redundancy and to prioritize the list. The information collected is listed below. The bold faced items represent the highest priority items as indicated by the group.

Service Gaps and Service Needs

1. **Services for weekend transportation to work, church, recreation, shopping, and medical. Rating: 8**
2. Lack of inter-connectivity with/between current providers and the need to develop transfer points. Rating: 2
3. More stable funding sources (got)

4. Lack of public/private partnerships
5. Eligibility issues between common carry vehicles/special medical vehicles
6. Increase mileage reimbursement for medical assistance families and volunteers.

Rating: 1

7. Funding silos/restrictions due to eligibility restrictions

8. **Better information to public on what services are available – who to call, cost.**

Rating: 13

- **Insert in Ladysmith News.**
- **Radio advertising.**
- **Rusk County Shopper**
- **Connect with heads of providers, businesses: PHA, Nursing Home, and Chamber of Commerce.**
- **Church Bulletins**
- **Commercial group activities.**
- **Rider Mentors: someone who rides shares with another non-rider.**
- **Website**
- **Rusk County Website**
- **Bag Flyers: Wal-Mart and Gordy's**
- **Posters at auto garages.**

9. **Centralized coordinator/contact where a core organization can direct/provide information and to coordinate each rider with individual or multi-transit provider for trip purposes. Rating: 5**

- **Development of a system to centralize services between available providers to get to where you want to be no matter where that is.**

10. Misdirection of funds- funds might be for van purchase where another organization is providing that service but one cannot use those funds for paying for ride.

11. Need for additional wheel-chair lifts

12. Public wanting more door-to-door services.

- Drive, walks or wheels to appropriate area – through the door: Negative-would slow down the driver, Positive-less stressful on the rider to go to appointments
- Volunteers to ride and walk.
- Volunteers at the clinic to meet rider at the van/bus and take them inside to the appointment desk/waiting room.

13. Cooperation of medical facilities and clients to cooperate with patient ability to make appointments based on transit schedule. Rating: 5

14. **Providing a mix of transit schedules – routes that meet needs of all population, within budgetary constraints. Rating: 9**

15. Efficiencies between all providers to maximize funding allocations – federal, state, county, and other. Rating: 3

16. Poor condition of vehicles – need for new vehicles. Rating: 6
17. Need to increase ridership in the city and in the rural areas throughout the county.
18. Need to subsidize ridership – (e.g.; vouchers for low-income population with transportation needs.) Rating: 1
19. **Need to promote ICAA Transit Services. Rating: 7**
 - **Rebrand the Transit Service: Name, appearance, visibility, impact, promotes inclusivity, change the image of who rides & why.**
 - **Two for free one day.**
 - **Take a friend.**
 - **Training**
20. Refining existing services – more affordable and accessible (Monday – Friday)
Rating: 2
21. **Expand and redefine transit services. Rating 8**
22. **Frail elderly/disabled require more service. Rating: 8**
23. Surveying people other than current riders. Rating: 2
24. Make transit service more user-friendly – with area businesses. Rating: 4
 - Get public officials to volunteer to ride the bus to meeting: City Council, County Board, Service Clubs, ITS.
25. Schedule isn't user-friendly.
26. A need for 24-hour service.
27. Need for more information about existing services. Rating: 4
28. “Cash for clunkers” problem with program. Rating: 4
29. **Service for low-income people to get vehicles fixed that are less expensive.**
Rating: 6
30. Survey to test our identified priorities.
31. Literacy is a problem for some populations that need transportation services.

In general, transportation providers do an adequate job of meeting the needs of the county population. However, as illustrated there significant service gaps and needed services. Some of the gaps and needs are not able to be locally controlled such as fuel prices and reimbursement rates.

Strategies and Actions

The following five year action plan was developed based on input from the meeting on August 14, 2009. This action plan is based update current needs, gaps, weaknesses and opportunities as generated by the attendees at the RUSK county SAFETEA-LU “Locally Developed Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Planning meeting” on Aug 14, 2009 in Ladysmith, WI.. It is important to point out that roadblocks to implementation of the strategies were also identified. In general, road blocks were related to availability and adequacy of funding to meet increased transportation need.

NEEDS	Strategies	Person(s) Responsible ¹	Benchmarks Short Term Indicators	Timeline By When?
Lack of public's awareness of the ITS transportation services. Ongoing advertising has been nonexistent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insert in Ladysmith News. • Radio advertising. • Rusk County Shopper • Connect with providers, businesses, Nursing Home, Chamber of Commerce. • Church Bulletins • Rider Mentors: someone who rides shares with another non-rider. • Improve Website for Transit • Link from Rusk County Website • Bag Flyers: Wal-Mart and Gordy's • Posters at auto garages. • Include advertising in STRAP budget • Seek additional funding for promotional activities. • Seek out and write additional grants and funding requests for Transit. 	<p>Director/Staff Indianhead program Directors Partners – including Dept of Aging – Health Social Services County and City Government.</p> <p>Transit Director</p>	<p>1. Baseline Ridership and monitor monthly.</p> <p>2. Survey new riders to determine which strategies most effective.</p> <p>3. Survey new riders to determine segment penetration.</p> <p>Services to all segments of the Rusk county residents continues to increase Report to Rusk County Transit Authority</p>	<p>Ongoing with summary reports provided at RTA Board meetings.</p> <p>On-going with benchmark statistical reports provided every 6 months.</p>
Increasing numbers of residents in poverty need access to food banks, medical and educational-job search services in Ladysmith.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek innovative ways to fund expanded routes and service to disabled and those in poverty. • Increase availability of accessible vehicles. 	Transit Director		
Services for weekend transportation to work, church, recreation, shopping, and medical. Rating: 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility for State or Federal funding to fund cost of expanded services in this and/or related areas. • 	<p>Transit Director</p> <p>Transit Director</p>	<p>Research on file. Grant applications on file.</p> <p>Survey results on file.</p>	Ongoing 2015
Expand and redefine transportation services. Rating 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan to expand services beyond traditional by exploring possibilities of mobility management principles, including a one-stop-travel information center, feeder routes to intercity (WisDOT) services, and or high speed rail services. • Expand /improve service hours, geographic coverage, driver's assistance and expand volunteer driver pool. 	Transit Director and Staff	Plan summary presented to Rusk County Transit Authority	Ongoing to 2015

¹ Person(s) Responsible: Identify all potential partners..

NEEDS	Strategies	Person(s) Responsible ¹	Benchmarks Short Term Indicators	Timeline By When?
Expand services to frail and elderly residents of RUSK county. Rating 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement a plan to research the need for expanded services and access to frail and elderly residents of Rusk County. Work closely with Human Services, gaining and medical community. • Seek out and apply for additional funding as available. 	Transit Director and Staff	Present plan to Rusk County Transit Authority. Implement research and write up results. Make recommendations.	Ongoing to 2015
Providing a mix of transit schedules – routes that meet needs of all population. Rating: 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand STRAP services with 2010 STRAP grant application. • Hire a mobility manager. • Purchase IT tools to enhance data management and scheduling 	Transit Director	Apply for continuation/ expansion and IT funding from WisDOT and Stimulus funds.	Ongoing to 2015
Service for low-income people to get vehicles fixed that are less expensive. Rating: 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out and apply for additional grant funding to provide increased services to low-income individuals who need car repairs to look for work or get to work. • Implement rider survey to determine the demand and potential ridership. • Develop vehicle loan and./or repair programs. 	Transit Director	Apply for WTEP or other grants as available.	Ongoing to 2015

Attachment A
Invitation Letter

August 5, 2008

Dear Friends of Transportation:

As many of you may know, funding under a number of transportation programs - Elderly and Disabled Capital Assistance Program (Section 5310), New Freedom Initiative, Job Access and Reverse Commute (WETAP/JARC) requires that projects be a part of a locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. In 2006, county meetings were held to develop the required plans. Since the 2006 meetings, final guidance on coordination has been issued requiring that we meet again.

Rather than just seeing this as a “requirement”, we are hoping that we can all see it as an opportunity to improve our transportation systems through regional coordination and access to additional funding to provide needed services. The focus of the 2008 coordination process developed by WisDOT is on multi-county and regional plans.

Representatives from Human Service Departments and Aging Units from Washburn, Sawyer, and Rusk Counties, with the help of Northwest Regional Planning Commission (NWRPC), is hosting what we hope will be a meeting to guide us toward further coordination and improved transportation services for persons who are elderly, disabled, or of low income, in and between our counties.

We need your help. The coordination process requires participation from a wide range of transportation providers (public, private, non-profit), human service providers, county board members, and members of the public. To make it a productive meeting, and to assess the needs of our counties and the region, we need you there. Please do not let your agency/company’s views go unrepresented. If you cannot make it, send another representative, if at all possible. The meeting is scheduled for:

Attachment B
Invitation/Attendance List

Locally Developed Coordination Plan Meeting Participant List is highlighted

Marlene Tuma
D&M Home Care
103 E Miner Avenue
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Thomas Draghi, M.S.
DWD, Ladysmith Job Center
108 W 2nd N
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Healthcare Transport
1100 W 5th St S
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Key Care, Inc.
119 E 4th St N
Ladysmith, WI 54848
Tanya Frey

Erika Robinson, Director
Rusk County Senior Services
311 E Miner Ave
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Ronald Moser
Veteran's Services
311 E Miner Ave
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Thomas Costello
Rusk County Board
N1421 Pulaski Lake Road
Bruce, WI 54819

Eugene Dusell
Rusk County Board
W7543 County Hwy J
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Henry Golat
Rusk County Board
N2754 Dicus Road
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Anthony Hauser
Rusk County Board
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Tony, WI 54563

Erny Heiden
Rusk County Board
PO Box 182
Conrath, WI 54731

James Hofacker
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Phil Kaiser
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Hawkins, WI 54530

Lucinda LaPorte
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Glen Flora, WI 54526

Lyle Liefkring
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N4868 Pieper Road
Weyerhaeuser, WI 54895

Kathleen Mai
Rusk County Board
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

James Platteter
Rusk County Board
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Sandra Roth
Rusk County Board
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Philip Schneider
Rusk County Board
N678 A Street
Sheldon, WI 54766

James Schultz
Rusk County Board
307 E Lake Ave
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Eldon Skogen
Rusk County Board
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Bruce, WI 54819

Johnathan Stencil
Rusk County Board
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Weyerhaeuser, WI 54895

Roger Svoma
Rusk County Board
W9874 County A
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Clifford Taylor
Rusk County Board
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

David Willingham
Rusk County Board
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Bill Ellmann
Health & Human Services
Board
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Marge Spangberg
Health & Human Services Board
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Charles Frafjord
Health & Human
Services Board
202 Maplewood Drive

Ronald Grzeszkowiak
Health & Human Services
Board
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Ted East
Aging Services Committee
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Shirley VanDam
Northern Bridges
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Michelle Diamond
Aging Services Committee
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Gary Rivers
Aging Services Committee /
RC HHS
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Nellie Kolar
Aging Services
Committee
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Delores Schultz
Aging Services Committee
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Tony, WI 54563

Phyllis Stevenson
Aging Services Committee
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Holcombe, WI 54745

Don Locke
Aging Services
Committee
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Millon Mincoff
Aging Services Committee
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Tony, WI 54563

Marg Ellmann
Aging Services Committee
1021 W 5th Street S
Ladysmith, WI 54848

Wayne Stevens
Veteran's Service
Commission
N5286 Sunny Hill

Erle Barber
Veteran's Service
Commission
W7753 Old 14 Road

Roger Kolar
Veteran's Service Commission
W5664 Broken Arrow Road
Sheldon, WI 54766

Gwen Steele
DVR
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Jean Stapleton
CEP, Inc.
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Rusk County Economic Support
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Ladysmith, WI

Randy Tatur
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Rice Lake, WI 54868

Winnie Lee
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Ladysmith, WI 54848

Jean Shibley
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Lorraine Flohr
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Ladysmith, WI 54848
ICAA

Nancy Kraft
ICAA- Grant writer

Brett Gerber
ICAA
CFO/CEO

**Attachment C
Meeting Agenda**



**RUSK County Coordinated
Public Transit-Human Services
Planning**

Date: August 14, 2009
Location: Club 8 – Ladysmith, WI

AGENDA

8:30 Welcome, Agenda Overview & Introductions – Jim Wheeler

9:00 State and Federal Overview – Dave Lowe, Lead, WisDOT Admin and Finance Unit, Madison, WI

- SAFETEA-LU and WisDOT Planning Requirements
- State & Federal Grants – Rural

10:00 Overview of ITS/Ladysmith & Rusk Transit Services – Jim Wheeler, Transit/ITS

10:45 BREAK

11:00 Group Process Work – Nancy Kraft, ICAA

- Discuss Identified Needs
- Prioritize Needs
- Identify Strategies

12:30 LUNCH - PROVIDED

Attachment D

RUSK County Services/Consumers Inventory Identified at Coordination Meeting

- Human Services Agency-voucher MA within all three counties (Consumer)
- ICAA-Rusk (sometimes in Barron) (Provider)
- Key Care-medical (primarily in Rusk)-(Provider)
- Head Start (all counties) (Provider)
- Veterans Services Consumer)
- Unit on Aging (Consumer)
- School Districts (Provider)
- Private Individuals who transport people with MA reimbursement with state and federal reimbursement
 - HS Department
 - ICAA (Provider)
- Black River Industries (service in far southern Rusk County)
- Ambulance Services (Provider)
- West Lake Enterprises (Consumer)
- Mikan School (Consumer)