

2004 Report to Membership

March 16, 2005

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Mission Statement:

Provide community transit services for people with special transportation needs in the Municipal District of Rocky View and surrounding area

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Major Initiatives

Regional Special Transportation Needs Assessment

In February 2003, Access Calgary/ Calgary Transit invited a few rural handibus stakeholders to: "...Discuss transportation issues related to individuals living outside large municipalities."

The Calgary Regional Partnership is carrying our initial effort forward with \$75,000 funding and oversight for a region-wide assessment of special needs transportation. With some 35 stakeholders (municipalities, service providers, etc), many are experiencing similar transportation issues.

A consultant has been retained. Work has begun. The first public forum of the assessment is scheduled for March 22, 2005. Information about the regional partnership can be found at: www.calgaryregion.ca.

Technology Needs Assessment

We submitted a proposal to the Calgary Foundation to fund research regarding our technology requirements. One need is software to help us organize trips, drivers, vehicles and passengers. Research is required to ensure that we understand our requirements and determine if various products available could meet those needs.

The study has helped us consider what we need immediately as well as consider what we need for the future. It also allowed us to look at some software packages currently available. Specialized software can run \$10,000 to \$40,000 for an organization such as ours. Obviously a large undertaking for a group such as ourselves.

In the Calgary region, there are four non-profit groups providing rural special needs transportation. A significant component of our proposal was to investigate options to possibly share such software with these other rural transportation groups. By attending a regional meeting of the Canadian Urban Transit Association, we also discussed scheduling with Edmonton, Saskatoon, Regina, Victoria St. Albert, Medicine Hat and Red Deer. We have used the funding opportunity to also interview transportation groups in Sherwood Park, Lacombe and Newell County.

The initial research has been done. The consultation with three rural handibus groups in the Calgary Area has been completed. Recommendations are being finalized for completion at the end of March 2005. One factor delaying the final report has been the pending regional special transportation review by the Calgary Regional Partnership. We have identified a certain overlap between the two studies with respect to the tools service providers will need.

We would not have had the resources to undertake this research without the assistance of the Colin Fraser, Daniel Kenneth Fraser and May Shields Fraser fund.

Community Transportation Project

In February 2002, we approached the Calgary Foundation with a concept for a different form of rural special needs transportation. We call it the “Community Transportation Project.”

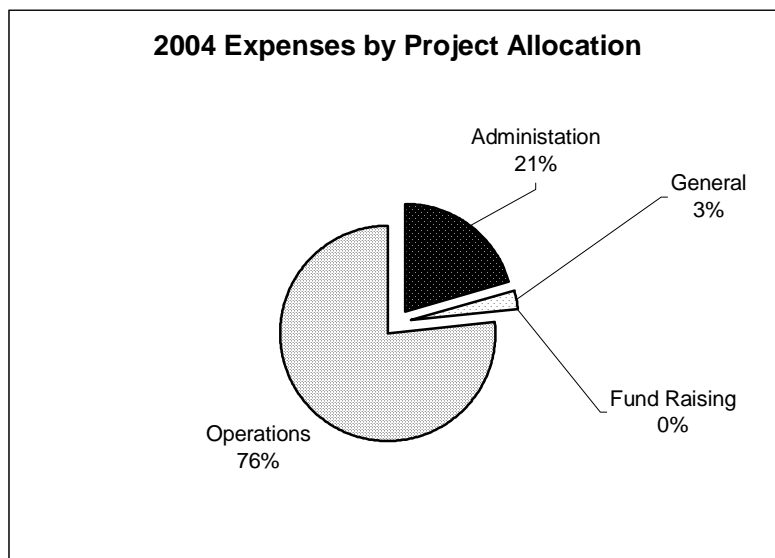
The project expands our operation in a specified area, piloting the transition from on-demand handibus into a rural community bus (with a flexible route). We are trying to develop self-sustaining links between the communities of Crossfield, Beiseker, Irricana and Rocky View. We have expanded our passenger eligibility criteria to include a broader part of the rural community. We are starting small and sustainable and expanding as demand warrants.

The Calgary Foundation awarded \$10,000 to develop this idea and \$17,500 towards the first year of operation. In September 2003, we received \$30,000 from the Alberta Government Community Initiatives Program extending the program by two more years. We have encountered several opportunities to develop the program and intend to continue the effort.

Our most recent opportunity was a joint program with the Crossfield Elks Club and the Crossfield Recreation Board to establish a regular run for seniors in Crossfield attending a seniors fitness program at an Airdrie recreation facility. Seniors pay \$1 to travel to the swim program where the Elks have subsidized admission. The schedule is designed to allow one or two extra stops in Airdrie, allowing Crossfield residents to catch a ride with the “swim club” and be dropped at a different location (mall, doctor, etc.).

Overhead

Using Canadian Urban Transit Association performance guidelines, we identify our overhead/administration costs to be roughly 21%.



Strategic Plan

Item	Status
2003	
Fund development plan	<i>Initiated in 2003. Raised \$30,000 in 2004</i>
Business plan	<i>Initiated in 2003. Still in draft stage</i>
Upgrade scheduling software	<i>Grant from Calgary Foundation to research needs and collaboration possibilities</i>
New and replacement bus program plan	<i>Fund-raising activities in progress. Researching specifications for new buses.</i>
2004	
Implement new bus replacement program	<i>\$15,000 raised specifically for new bus in 2004</i>
Study demographics and potential need/growth	<i>Participation in steering committee for region-wide special transportation needs assessment with Calgary Regional Partnership.</i>
Plan and determine satellite run #1	<i>One driver is operating independently in SE Rocky View region (Sept 2004). However require base / facility for spare bus and winter plug-in.</i>
Establish relationship with another municipality	<i>Presentation to Council has been made. Discussions are in progress.</i>
2005	
Start satellite run #1	<i>Initial start Sept. 2004. Concept to be refined</i>
Determine future service levels & bus needs	<i>Initial efforts coinciding with Calgary Regional Partnership collaboration to review special transportation</i>
Plan and determine satellite run #2	
Pursue joint ridership opportunities with RVSD	
2006	
Start satellite run #2	
Secure new facility in response to growth	
Seek relationship with another municipality	
2007	
Review	
Identify new program opportunities	

Municipal Highlights

Airdrie

In March 2002, The City of Airdrie consolidated their public transportation services with Cardinal Coach Lines of Calgary. After the new policies were introduced, a gap existed for Airdrie residents looking for transportation on Monday, Wednesday or Friday -- the days when Airdrie Transit's special needs bus does not travel to Calgary. When schedule permits, we still provide transportation for situations such as pre-school development programs, hospital tests for newborn infant (and family), cataract surgery appointments, dialysis and such.

Almost three years after Airdrie's policy change, we still receive 3- 5 serious enquiries each week. We hope Airdrie will be able to fill this gap soon and permit us to re-focus on our core region. In the meantime, we greatly appreciate the financial support of the Airdrie Lions, Airdrie Lioness Club, Airdrie Knights of Columbus and the Royal Canadian Legion Branch #288. Corporate support has included TD Canada Trust and the RBC Foundation.

MD of Rocky View

We were pleased Rocky View allocated \$20,000 of their \$37,000 Special Transportation Provider (STP) program to our operations.

We have had several discussions with council and administration regarding growth in the Municipality. Our discussions included how to find the resources to foster a larger handibus operation. To facilitate the discussion, we produced a discussion paper envisioning transportation to the entire Municipal District, including the Springbank/Bragg Creek area. While Rocky View obviously has multiple priorities to undertake, we are pleased that discussions continue.

Support from MD of Rocky View stakeholders include the Nexen Balzac Employees, Bonavista Petroleum, Burnco Rock Products, South Rock Construction, TransCanada and a land developer near Airdrie. MD of Rocky View FCSS director, Randy Ell, the, has also been a great source of advice.

Crossfield

The Crossfield Elks approached us regarding a twice a week program at the East Lake Fitness centre in Airdrie. The Elks had become aware of a senior at the Crossfield Lodge commuting to a pool Calgary to swim. With the renovation of the Airdrie facility, the elks promoted a seniors fitness program with transportation provided by RVRH. Daily participation averaged 5.5 participants through the first six months (we had optimistically hoped for 4 people per day)

The program permits some flexibility. We can schedule an extra stop / pick-up in Crossfield and also in Airdrie. Thus an additional Crossfield resident (senior or otherwise unable to drive) can opt to catch a ride to the bank/ mall instead of the fitness facility. We hope to expand this program to include other Crossfield seniors groups in the near future.

We appreciate the support of Crossfield Town Council. Crossfield continues to appoint a member of Council to sit on our board. We also appreciate the support of Finnie Trucking, Crossfield Legion, Crossfield Lions, Crossfield Elks #416 and the Crossfield Recreation Board.

Chestermere

We regularly field calls from Chestermere residents and folks considering a move to Chestermere. Despite Chestermere's opinion that they are "too small for a handibus," we accommodate some Chestermere residents as scheduling permits.

We made a presentation to Chestermere Council in December 2004. We asked Council to re-visit the special transportation situation in Chestermere. Discussions with the Chestermere FCCSS board are underway. We hope this will be the year that we help Chestermere develop a plan for community transportation.

Irricana

Through the Community Transportation Project, we have been able to continue to facilitate transportation for Irricana residents. We provided approximately 340 trips in 2004. We greatly appreciate the support of the Irricana Lions, the Village of Irricana and Tall Taylor Publishing

Beiseker

Beiseker's support to help us develop more transportation in the village has been hampered by our own fumbling with the "Community Transportation Project." Although we carried some newspaper advertisement, it appears that the logistics (length/ cost of the trip) presents a significant barrier. We appreciate the support of the Village of Beiseker and their seniors group as we continue to pursue this program.

Cochrane

The Big Hill Seniors Activity Society continues to be a great collaborator. Although both of our groups have fairly defined regions with little overlap, we continue to coordinate whenever possible. For example, we occasionally transport someone from Calgary to Cochrane when the Cochrane schedule is full.

Rocky View School Division #41

Although not a "municipality," the Rocky View School Division remains one of our strongest collaborators in the region. Mid-way through the 2003 school year we acquired another run in Airdrie, bringing us to six school division runs. We presently run:

- Airdrie to Calgary
- Beaupre/Cochrane to Calgary
- Dalemead/Chestermere/ Shepard to Calgary
- Airdrie and surrounding region (3 buses)

Fund Development

2004 was our second year to fund-raise for direct operations. This is in addition to fund-raising activities for replacement or new buses. Our simple plan seeks neighbouring stakeholders to contribute part of the big funding goal. By spreading the work around, we achieve more stability.

Rocky View Regional Handibus has committed to the Ethical Fund-raising Code of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and is licenced for Fund-raising by the Alberta Government.

Pre-school/youth

In June 2004, we initiated another 12-month campaign to raise \$25,000 towards operation of our youth/preschool transportation. We are pleased with our first six months of this fund-raising effort. As of Dec 31, 2004, this campaign has raised about \$14,000.

• Nexen Balzac Gas Complex Employees	\$1,260
• TD Canada Trust Community Involvement	\$2,500
• Children's Hospital Aid Society	\$2,500
• RBC Foundation	\$2,500
• TransCanada	\$2,500
• Compton Petroleum	\$1,000
• South Rock Employee's Foundation	\$1,000
• Airdrie Knights of Columbus	\$500
• Airdrie Lions Club	\$500

Capital Funding/Vehicle Replacement

Since 2001, our repair and maintenance costs have more than doubled. This is mostly attributable to the age of the buses and the high mileage nature of the transportation we provide. A concise capital funding proposal has been developed and is being circulated with interested parties. Through donations and matching grants from Alberta's Community Initiative program, we aim to replace two buses in 2005 and two buses in 2006.

The estimated cost of a replacement bus is \$60,000 to \$75,000. Replacing two buses, we estimate that \$12,000 of operation savings will be available in the first year. Another \$8,000 will be saved in the following year.

In November 2004, the Associated Commercial Travellers (Calgary) presented us with a cheque for \$15,000 towards a new bus. We plan to find other donations totalling \$45,000 in 2005. We will then apply for provincial lottery funds to match our \$60,000 amount. Negotiations with other donors are currently in progress.

Fleet Details

Our buses are equipped to Canadian Standards Association (CSA) D409 specifications. Our vehicles are maintained by licensed mechanics and also inspected semi-annually to Alberta Transportation standards.

Van	Year/Model	Fuel	Seating	Odometer (12-31-04)
1	1996 GMC Rally 350	Gas	W/C: 1/Amb: 7	373,973 km
2	1994 Dodge Ram 350	Propane	W/C: 2/Amb: 7	518,409 km
3	1994 Dodge B250	Propane	W/C: 1/Amb: 7	364,008 km
4	2000 Dodge B350	Propane	W/C: 1/Amb: 10	286,656 km
5	1994 Dodge Ram 350	Gas	W/C: 2/Amb: 7	182,290 km
6	1995 Ford 7.3L	Diesel	W/C: 2/Amb: 15	275,147 km
8	2000 Dodge B350	Propane	W/C: 2/Amb: 7	242,253 km
12	1998 GMC/Girardin	Gas	W/C: 2/Amb: 7	249,794 km (Ray Howden bus)

Return to the Community

One of the situations we frequently encounter regards transportation to post hospital therapies. Passengers often find themselves discharged early with physician instruction to return to the hospital for specialist therapy. Some experience total recovery and require only short-term transportation arrangements. Other passengers remain in long-term home-care programs. No one would be able to leave hospital early if transportation was not available for the follow-up therapies.

Using 2003 ridership data, we calculate that we facilitated the home care of an equivalent 2 adults for a full year (730 person days). If care at home facilitates a saving of \$400 per day over hospital stay, then Alberta Health was able to save almost \$290,000 in 2003.

Similarly, we identified another four rural seniors with need for occasional transportation. These Albertans were living in their homes but were unable to drive for various medical or family situations (e.g. spousal illness). Transportation for these families enabled four couples to stay out of a seniors residence for another year. The ministry responsible for housing (Alberta Seniors) thus saved about \$100 /day from this effort or about \$140,000 for the year.

We also transported 8-12 special needs preschoolers to development programs in Calgary. We estimate that our support of up to eight families helped Alberta Childrens Services save about \$120,000. The additional benefit of special needs children ready for Grade one (and less-likely to hold up the entire class) is much more difficult to calculate but does represent further long-term savings to Alberta Learning and the Community at large.

These figures bear review by economists however we identify over \$500,000 of support in 2003 to Alberta Government policies and strategies. We assume this saving was repeated in 2004.

Transportation Statistics

Municipality/Group		Calgary Destinations				Local Destinations			
		2001	2002	2003	2004	2001	2002	2003	2004
School Board	Education	1287	1644	2029	2759	2437	1715	2224	4222
	Total	1287	1644	2029	2759	2437	1715	2224	4222
Airdrie	Education	2175	1949	1461	908	34	68*	138	211
	Medical	323	150*	0	94	626	170*	0	0
	Personal	223	79*	3	1	509	120*	0	0
	Recreation	128	36*	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Respite	0	8*	0	0	891	176*	0	0
	Work/Volunteer	265	127	80	0	311	116*	0	0
	Total	3114	2349	1544	1003	2371	650	138	211

Note: *: tender awarded to Cardinal Coach lines April 1 2002.

Crossfield	Education	0	0	141	412	36	4	0	0
	Medical	19	49	64	56	15	22	24	33
	Personal	16	18	4	7	62	80	37	695
	Respite	0	0	0	0	6	97	58	0
	Work	0	0	10	0	0	0	28	0
Total	35	67	219	475	119	203	147	728	

MD of Rocky View	Education	458	804	846	1009	0	0	6	0
	Medical	127	193	258	405	4	26	25	7
	Personal	2	4	6	6	0	53	140	127
	Recreation	83	84	69	0	0	0	0	0
	Respite	11	0	0	2	0	64	204	147
	Work/Volunteer	665	654	801	767	424	400	522	465
Total	1346	1739	1980	2189	428	543	897	746	

Beiseker	Medical					4	0	0	
	Total					4	0	0	

Irricana	Medical		1	0	7		0	6	0
	Personal		0	0	2		0	0	1
	Respite		0	0	0		94	335	201
	Total		1	0	9		94	341	202

Chestermere	Education	420	165	0	9				
	Respite/personal	17	0	2	8				
	Work/Volunteer	122	96	0	0				
	Total	559	261	2	17				

Note: Transportation reduced in June 2002 due to program losses

Misc	Education	0	0	156	410	0	0	0	0
	Personal	10	19	68	199	1	30	0	22
	Respite	9	0	0	0	16	10	0	53
	Work/Volunteer	5	16	99	131	0	2	0	2
	Total	24	35	323	740	17	42	0	77

Note: Transfers, Charters, pro bono transportation, etc.

Regional Sub-Totals	6365	6096	6097	7192	5372	3251	3747	6186
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Overall Activity (all regions)	11737	9347	9844	13378
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Donations and Support

Over the past two years (2003 & 2004), handibus operations in the North Rocky View region were possible because of these supporters:

*(N.B * indicates multi-year assistance)*

Champions **\$15,000-\$34,999**

☞ Alberta Community Improvement Program*
☞ Associated Commercial Travellers ☞ Calgary Foundation ☞ Nexen Balzac Complex Employees*

Benefactors **\$5,000-\$14,999**

☞ Children's Hospital Aid Society* ☞ RBC Foundation* ☞ TD Canada Trust*
☞ TransCanada*

Underwriters **\$2,500-\$4,999**

☞ ScotiaBank ☞ Royal Canadian Legion #288*

Associates **\$1,000-\$2,499**

☞ Airdrie Knights of Columbus* ☞ Airdrie Lions* ☞ Airdrie Lioness* ☞ Compton Petroleum ☞ Crossfield Elks ☞ Crossfield Lions ☞ Sears Young Futures ☞ South Rock Employee's Foundation ☞ Southern AB Action Fund for The Disabled

Sustainers **\$500-\$999**

☞ ATCO Gas Employee Fund* ☞ Beddington Hall Board* ☞ Bonavista Petroleum ☞ Encana ☞ Irricana Lions ☞ Lloyd Ralston Family

Contributors **\$10-\$499**

☞ Crossfield Legion ☞ Finnie Trucking

Municipalities

Town of Crossfield*
MD of Rocky View #44*
Village of Beiseker*
Village of Irricana *
Town of Chestermere
Town of Cochrane
(* Indicates funding assistance)

Affiliations

Canadian Urban Transit Association
Imagine Canada
InKind Canada

Collaborating Organizations

(We greatly appreciate their advice and cooperation)

Alberta Kidney Foundation
Alberta Transportation
Big Springs Seniors Activity Society (Cochrane)
Calgary and Area Child and Family Services
Calgary Children's Village
Calgary Community Network Association
Calgary Foundation
Calgary Handibus Association
Calgary Health Region:
 Community Development
 Southern Alberta Renal Unit
 Volunteer Services (Airdrie)
Calgary Regional Partnership (Rick Butler)
Calgary Separate School Board
Calgary Transit/Access Calgary
Claresholm Transportation Society
Focus IT Solutions
Horizon School (Olds)
High River Handibus Association
Indefinite Arts Society
Kahanoff Centre
Municipal District of Rocky View FCSS
North Rocky View Community Resource Centre
Prince of Peace Village
Providence Childrens Centre
Quest Children's Society
Renfrew Educational Services
Rocky View Foundation
Rocky View School Division #41
Royal Canadian Legion #288 (Airdrie)
S. E. Rocky View Community Resource Centre
Strathmore Handibus Association

Suppliers

(These folks go above and beyond for us)

Airdrie Automotive
Crossfield Towing
East Lake Automotive
Golden Ou Properties
High Country Auto (Calgary)
Kirkman Bus Sales
Krystal Klear Windows
Moore's Autoglass
OK Tire (Airdrie)
Par Auto Parts
Rich Safety