



WHITE PINE COUNTY ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION COUNCIL

957 Campton Street • Ely, Nevada 89301 • (775)289-3065 • Fax(775)289-8860

April 12, 2004

The Honorable Joseph M. Neal Jr., Chairman
Legislative Commission's Interim Study Concerning
the Feasibility of Long-Range Mass Transit within
the State and to Urban Areas of Neighboring States

Chairman Neal and Members of the Committee:

I am pleased to meet with you today to discuss transportation needs in White Pine County.

As you are well aware, transportation is important to the quality of life and economy in White Pine County. Our communities are located 250 miles from urban centers in any direction. Adequate transportation facilities and services are critical for our quality of life, our ability to meet the needs of our senior citizens and low income households, business strength and economic development, and our efforts to increase tourism.

White Pine County is fortunate to have commercial air service through the federal Essential Air Service Subsidy and it provides one round trip to Las Vegas per day. The air service is especially beneficial in providing connections to out-bound air service and it allows travel to and from Las Vegas for meetings or business and return within the same day. Air travel to the Reno/Carson City and Salt Lake City areas requires making connections at Las Vegas and it is much more time consuming and costly.

The County also benefits from the Ely Buss service which provides intra- and inter-community travel among Ely, Ruth, and McGill. Due to reduced budgets, the bus service is no longer able to provide transportation services to urban areas or to offer local services past 5:00 p.m.

Discussions on transportation through the County's annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as well as discussions with local service providers to prepare for today's meeting indicate the following needs:

1. Lack of adequate transportation services to surrounding urban areas creates concerns for low income households and senior citizens who need to travel to urban areas for specialized medical services. The daily flight to Las Vegas does not always meet the needs of White Pine County residents who are served by specialists in Twin Falls, Idaho or Salt Lake City and St. George, Utah. In addition, some of our residents are not comfortable flying and they are especially fearful of flying in small planes.

PREPARED FOR YOUR BUSINESS

EXHIBIT <u>D</u> MassTransit	Document consists of <u>2</u> pages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entire document provided.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Due to size limitations, pages ____ through ____ provided.	
A copy of the complete document is available through the Research Library (775-684-6827 or e-mail library@lcb.state.nv.us).	
Meeting Date <u>4-13-04</u>	

Karen Rajala
April 12, 2004
Page 2

2. Low income households and senior citizens often do not feel confident driving themselves across the state, may not have adequate vehicles to longer trips, and often cannot afford to drive themselves to communities throughout Nevada or neighboring states to visit or attend family events.
3. Social Services agencies report that it is difficult for them to assist stranded motorists and provide transients with transportation to their destinations. The County's Social Services agency reports that it has had to purchase airplane tickets for indigent clients because no other transportation is available.
4. The lack of service within the County has a y negative impact on senior and low income residents of Baker and Lund, who have no way to get to Ely for services. The lack of service after 5:00 p.m. eliminates the bus service as a means to travel and from a job and our Social Service Agency reports that clients can be stranded at the Clinic because their medical appointments have been delayed past 4:30 in the afternoon.
5. In all walks of life, the lack of adequate, direct transportation to Salt Lake and the Reno/Carson City areas for meetings, business appointments, and to participate in state government creates a burden on time and budgets.
6. White Pine County has been successful in marketing the area for tourism including small conventions and business meetings. The lack of adequate public transportation is especially critical for special events. The County's Tourism Director reports the loss of convention trade because of the lack of adequate transportation for participants and speakers.
7. New businesses are locating in the County due to our quality of life. The lack of immediate access to the interstate highway system and the lack adequate public transportation is one of the reasons frequently cited for not selecting White Pine County as a business location.

Senator Neal and members of the Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. We appreciate your concern about the needs of the residents of our rural Nevada communities.

Sincerely,



Karen Rajala
Coordinator