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Public transit task force meets

By Staff Report

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Regional transportation was the topic of discussion at the Riley County ATA Transit System meeting Tuesday at the Riley County Courthouse. The meeting laid preliminary groundwork for a regional public transportation system in the seven counties that surround Fort Riley.

Lisa Koch, public transit manager for the Kansas Department of Transportation, began by familiarizing the audience with T-LINK Task Force, a team created by former Gov. Kathleen Sebelius and charged with creating a recommendation for a multi-year transportation funding program. The Coordinated Transportation Program, which is funded through fiscal year 2009, is currently in use but ends this month.

The mission of the T-LINK Task Force also includes looking at new business models and new approaches to current fiscal needs of transportation. To replace the Coordinated Transportation Program with a more effective transit system, the T-LINK Task force has turned to The Kansas Collaborative.

The Kansas Collaborative is a cooperative effort between the State of Kansas, the Kansas Association of Counties, and the League of Kansas Municipalities. Its goal is to encourage collaboration and improve government efficiency. TeamTech, Inc., a private consulting firm, founded and manages The Kansas Collaborative.

The Kansas Collaborative recommended the creation of a team to develop an understanding of the Regional Transit Approach, analyze details of how the Regional Transit Approach could work in the Riley County region, and then create an awareness campaign to reach out to consumers, providers, counties and cities.

Among those present to discuss and give input were state Rep. Sydney Carlin, the sustainability planner from Fort Riley, representatives of Pottawatomie County, Riley County commissioners, and K-State Student Body Vice President Wayne Stoskopf.

The team will start goal-setting sessions as early as July or August.

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