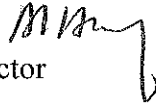


Potomac and Rappahannock
Transportation Commission14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

July 9, 2009

TO: Chairman May and Commissioners

FROM: Alfred H. Harf 
Executive Director

RE: Fatal Shootings at PRTC on June 15, 2009 and Collateral Story about
Background Checking Practices

Introduction

As widely reported, the PRTC Transit Center was the scene of a tragic double homicide on June 15th. One of the two murdered men was a First Transit/PRTC bus operator (Darnell McPherson), and the other (William Anderson) reportedly is related to a second bus operator who has been arrested and is in custody (Glenn Wade). For reasons detailed later in this informational report, the ensuing police investigation immobilized most of PRTC's operators and buses, necessitating the activation of our emergency service plan (ESP) and the assistance of multiple neighboring transportation providers to transport PRTC's customers returning home that afternoon.

Five days later, a Washington Post story reported that it had conducted a background check of its own on Mr. Wade which revealed that he had been convicted in 1999 and served 3.5 years (for drug possession with the intent to distribute and witness tampering), prior to being hired by First Transit as a PRTC operator in 2004. Responding to the Post's story, First Transit reaffirmed that it had conducted a background check on Mr. Wade before he was hired (as the contract between PRTC and First Transit requires), and found nothing in his record that would have been grounds for not hiring him.

Both the incident and the questions raised thereafter about background checking are naturally matters of grave concern to the Commission, so this informational report has been prepared to provide the most thorough account possible of what transpired, how we responded, lessons learned, and what we're doing going forward.

The June 15th incident and management's same day response

At approximately 11:00 AM, the three individuals were reportedly involved in a shoot-out near the PRTC Transit Center employee parking lot entrance on Potomac Mills Road. Two of the three were shot and succumbed to their wounds shortly thereafter. Mr. Wade fled the scene by making his way through the Transit Center into the bus yard, from where he made his way to points unknown, eluding law enforcement personnel that had been summoned to the Transit Center. That evening, Mr. Wade turned himself in at a nearby Police substation, and he remains in custody.

OmniRide • Metro Direct • OmniLink • Cross County Connector • OmniMatch • VRE

Administrative Office: (703)-583-7782 • Customer Info: (703) 730-6664 • Toll Free: (888) 730-6664 • Fax: (703) 583-1377 • PRTCtransit.org

Police and rescue workers were summoned by PRTC's security guard, who learned of the incident from the owner of PRTC's cleaning service who happened to be arriving at the Transit Center at the time. They arrived within minutes, attending to the victims, securing the crime scene, and learning as much as they could at the outset of the investigation by interviewing witnesses and reviewing recorded video of the Transit Center. Based on the eyewitness accounts and observations of recorded video, the police concluded that Mr. Wade was a suspect and that he might still be on the premises – both the eyewitness accounts and video recordings showed him entering the Transit Center building via the employee parking lot door and exiting by way of a back door into the bus yard where most of PRTC's OmniRide buses were present (having driven back to the Transit Center after the morning rush for their customary midday layover at the Center). Unable to positively confirm whether Mr. Wade had left the premises, the police locked down the bus yard, the parking lots and bus turnaround area, as well as the building proper (with First Transit/PRTC personnel inside it), and began actively searching for the suspect--for a period of time no one could enter or leave the grounds, including employees, guests, and customers.

The lockdown situation continued for what turned out to be about two and-a-half hours, during which time there was uncertainty about when the lockdown would end. During the course of the lockdown, PRTC and First Transit staffs were in continuous communication with each other and law enforcement personnel, assessing the situation and deciding on steps that needed to be taken as the likelihood grew that the lockdown would prevent the use of PRTC's own bus fleet for the afternoon commute. During that time, First Transit/PRTC operators scheduled for afternoon duty were directed to report to a nearby shopping center rather than the Transit Center, and await further instructions. PRTC management knew that alternate bus service arrangements would be necessary if access to the buses in the bus yard by 1:45 PM could not be assured, since the first of the buses are scheduled to depart the yard at 2 PM to deadhead north for the start of the afternoon commute.

At approximately 1:40 PM, PRTC management decided that alternate service arrangements would have to be made because there was uncertainty still about when the lockdown would end. At that point, the only available OmniRide buses were those few that were scheduled for midday service (since they had left the yard before the lockdown commenced), so PRTC management knew it would have an inadequate number of buses of its own for afternoon service even if the "emergency service plan" (ESP) were activated (which requires fewer buses than the "normal" operation).

Accordingly, PRTC management decided to activate the ESP for the "commuter service" portion of the bus operation¹ and enlist the help of neighboring transportation providers, at which point

¹ Local bus services (OmniLink, Cross County Connector, and Metro Direct routes) were in day-long operation away from the Transit Center, so the only necessary local service alteration for those services was the necessity to move the "passenger transfer" location from PRTC to nearby Potomac Mills (which the Mills management graciously assented to).

Chairman May and Commissioners

July 9, 2009

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established incident management communications were initiated, supplemented by direct phone calls to those transportation providers viewed as most likely to be in the position to help (e.g., WMATA, the Fairfax Connector, VRE, etc.). Other providers and affiliated organizations also responded (e.g., Fredericksburg's FRED system, Alexandria DASH, NVTC, and the MTA), all of which played a part in helping with customer communications (e.g., posting notices at bus stops to inform customers that PRTC's ESP was operative). First Transit and PRTC management arranged for still more buses/operators by contacting Greyhound (a subsidiary of First Transit's parent company, FirstGroup) and New World Tours (a charter operator), respectively.

Customer communications commenced in parallel with the service assessment efforts during the lockdown (the first of a series of "Rider Express" emails was sent to subscribers around 1:00 PM and other notifications were put in place [web site, on-hold phone recording, media alerts, etc.]) to alert customers of the situation (attachment one). The earliest of these communications preceded the decision to activate the ESP, so it simply informed customers that the early afternoon trips would operate but would be late, and told them that the duration of the impact was still uncertain. Notification that the ESP had been activated occurred at 2:45 PM (attachment two), later than intended because First Transit/PRTC management had been ordered to evacuate the building around 2:00 PM as the police shifted the search for Mr. Wade (with a sniffing dog) to the building proper.

Around 2:30PM, the police allowed specified PRTC and First Transit employees to retrieve their cars from the employee parking lot under tightly-controlled conditions so these employees could make their way to strategic locations in order to manage the afternoon ESP service. Individuals assisting at Franconia/Springfield and West Falls Church Metro stations (the standard service locations for ESP) brought with them multiple copies of "turn sheets" (directions) for every route and window signs for buses, knowing that most of the assembled operators would not be familiar with the intricacies of PRTC's routes/operations. Throughout the course of the afternoon, First Transit/PRTC personnel at the Metrorail stations informed customers of the plan, coordinated buses, provided instruction to bus operators, and sought passenger volunteers riding the buses home to assist the "brand-new-to-PRTC-service" bus operators with routing, bus stops, etc.

In addition to our employees' presence at the Metrorail stations, other First Transit/PRTC employees were stationed at the local park-and-ride lots to manage shuttle services that were also instituted to get people back to their neighborhoods, and still other employees drove along PRTC routes in DC and Arlington to alert customers waiting at bus stops who were unaware of the situation.

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Since PRTC's ESP stipulates that service is free whenever the ESP is implemented without advance notice, fare collection was a non-issue. Thanks to a quick and ample response to our appeal for assistance, waits at Metro stations were few and relatively short. As always, whenever ESP is in effect, the shorter route length (only to/from Metro instead of DC/Arlington) allowed us to get by with far fewer vehicles and greatly simplified the operation for bus operators since their only origin location was a Metro station. Almost without exception, customers praised staff for mobilizing so quickly and expressed sympathy and condolences.

The next day (June 16th)

Service operated in the normal manner the following morning with the exception of two trips that could not be operated because of a shortage of operators (in addition to the two directly affected operators, several others who witnessed the incident were too emotionally shaken to report). First Transit made arrangements for Employee Assistance Program (EAP) grief counselors to be present at the Transit Center that day and on June 17th, so anyone needing counseling had ready access to it. Another Rider Express and a news release were distributed that afternoon (attachment three) publicly thanking neighboring transportation providers and passengers for their assistance in the aftermath of Monday's tragedy, and letters of appreciation were subsequently sent to the providers and others (attachment four).

More recent developments

On Thursday evening, June 18th, First Transit management informed PRTC management that it had been contacted by the Washington Post to discuss the findings of a Washington Post-instigated background check on Mr. Wade. First Transit management recounted that, by the Washington Post's telling, Mr. Wade had been convicted in 1999 and incarcerated for more than three years (for drug possession with the intent to distribute and witness tampering), prior to being hired by First Transit as a PRTC operator in 2004. First Transit management assured PRTC management that a background check on Mr. Wade had been performed as required prior to Mr. Wade's hiring, and that it had not revealed anything that would have been cause for not hiring him². In the wake of the Washington Post's finding, First Transit performed a second

² From the outset of the PRTC – First Transit contract, the contract has expressly prohibited the hiring of a person as an operator found to have a felony conviction or a drug / alcohol conviction of any sort. The contract provisions regarding background checking and hiring prohibitions were amended in 2006 with the Commission's approval to expand the scope of covered employees and the nature of required background checking. More recently still, First Transit has seen fit to institute a more expansive background checking practice on its own volition, since the background checking done previously was confined to only states where the applicant was known to reside, based on the content of the application. The more expansive check now being used includes a credit check, which provides a way of independently verifying whether all places that an applicant resided were listed in the application. All states where the applicant resided are then checked, whether the addresses were listed in the application or not.

background check on Mr. Wade using the more expansive checking practice First Transit now employs as a matter of course, and it too did not reveal what the Post reported.

On Friday, June 19th, the Washington Post contacted PRTC management to disclose the same findings and inquire about PRTC's planned course of action. PRTC management informed the Post of the relevant contract provisions, expressed its concern about the Post's findings, and indicated that further fact-finding had been initiated to assess the situation and decide on an appropriate course of action. On Saturday, June 20th, the Post ran its story (attachment five), and the following week First Transit and PRTC management discussed the situation. As an outgrowth of those discussions, First Transit and PRTC management have concluded that changes are indeed necessary to further fortify background checking practices, with the key focus on:

1. Adding a federal search feature to First Transit's current background check process – the conviction discovered by the Washington Post was a federal court case. Searches of federal court records are generally less reliable for matching offenders to specific employees because the federal records block social security numbers and addresses, two key identifiers for an accurate match. First Transit will use this search to the extent practical, cognizant of the limits as described here.
2. Adding a fingerprinting requirement for all new hires to effectively access the FBI criminal records database, the primary resource to search for federal convictions – this feature is under legal review by First Transit as this database is not generally available to private employers except in strictly limited cases, where legislated (for example, school bus drivers), and may have limits based on various state laws.
3. The possibility of First Transit subscribing to one of the internet background check search engines to cross check all or some of the results provided by its current commercial background check service, USIS. First Transit is investigating this possibility.
4. An in-depth analysis of the circumstances that led to the limited report of Mr. Wade's background, done by a panel of First Transit's internal experts, supplemented by USIS professionals. Additional background check enhancements to those described above may be adopted to provide greater confidence that employees with unacceptable background histories will not be hired.

While background checking is an inexact science because there is no universal database that captures all criminal offenses in one place, the changes described here respond directly to the vulnerabilities that the Washington Post story and ensuing investigation found.

Independent of the issues revealed by the Wade case, First Transit is also in the midst of conducting the first of its planned triennial rechecks of all of its more than 14,000 employees. As issues are identified, the results are being further investigated (e.g., pulling actual court records) to determine if they have been dismissed, expunged, found not guilty, or are minor and occurred sufficiently in the past with no further criminal convictions to consider the employee effectively rehabilitated. First Transit will keep PRTC management informed as this process moves forward.

The newly fortified background checking practices, listed above, will be used for all new applicants, and to examine the histories of all those already employed at PRTC. Findings resulting from checks of existing employees will be used by First Transit to determine whether anyone currently employed warrants dismissal. First Transit has pledged to keep PRTC fully informed as this review process continues.

Financial ramifications of the June 15th incident

Because other transportation providers had to be enlisted to help and because fare collection was suspended in the afternoon, the events of the day naturally had financial ramifications. First Transit and PRTC are discussing how those costs should be allocated based on all of the facts of this event.

Lessons Learned

Deliberations in the wake of the June 15th incident and its aftermath have led to a number of conclusions about necessary changes going forward:

1. Heightened sensitivity by First Transit management about workforce interactions. In a memo to its PRTC employees, First Transit reminded them that it has a toll-free hotline that employees can use, anonymously or otherwise, to communicate concerns and seek advice. The hotline is manned by live operators 24 hours a day, and uses established protocols for collecting the reports and directing them to the appropriate First Transit professional for response. The hotline is used with some frequency and appears to be working well, and First Transit's "reminder" memo serves the useful purpose of reinforcing the fact that this resource exists. First Transit has also: reminded its employees of its Employee Assistance Program (EAP; also a 24-hour per day service, staffed by professionals trained to direct callers to the proper counselors and services); provided the names and contact information of its HR managers and region senior managers; reminded its employees of the grievance process in the union labor agreement; and invited employees to utilize the company's Open Door policy by bringing issues to the local First Transit management team.

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July 9, 2009
Page 7

2. Transit Center security accommodations. Two facility surveillance cameras were found to be inoperable, hampering efforts to continuously trace the flight path of Mr. Wade. Had his flight path been fully recorded, the multi-hour fugitive search would not have been required assuming his departure from the bus yard had been captured on video³. Procedures have been enacted for security guards to confirm the proper functioning of all cameras at the start of each shift and to report any malfunctions to the proper staff person. PRTC staff will also be reviewing default camera views and other functionality to determine whether modifications are warranted.
3. Customer notifications (physical). We did not have time to produce laminated signs to hang on DC-area bus stops before police evacuated the building to search for the suspect. Had we been able to post signs, perhaps some who were standing at our bus stops would have had a shorter wait. We now have generic signs ready to go.
4. Customer notifications (telephone). We discovered that the installation of our new Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) phone system disabled the capability of remotely changing phone messages – this prevented staff from being able to place a timely message for callers while the building was cordoned off. We are in the process of remedying this so that a message can be recorded from any phone.
5. Background checking practices. The changes described previously will be enacted as quickly as practical, some with immediate effect.

Management would be pleased to respond to any questions this informational memorandum may prompt.

Attachments: As stated

³ Most cameras have a movable viewing range (“pan, tilt, and zoom”) versus a fixed view in order to have the collective capability of covering the entire premises. Whether either or both of the non-functioning cameras would have been trained on areas that would have captured Wade’s flight is unknown.

Christine Rodrigo

From: riderexpress-bounces@prtctransit.org on behalf of Rider Express is your email hotline to all the latest news at PRTC. [riderexpress@prtctransit.org]
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2009 1:04 PM
To: riderexpress@prtctransit.org
Subject: [RiderExpress] PM OmniRide delays - sent 6/15 @ 1:03 p.m.
Attachments: ATT374006.txt

**** Please do not respond to this e-mail address; it is used only by our automated alert systems and is not monitored for responses. Send responses to OMNI@OMNIRIDE.COM ****

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The PRTC Transit Center in Woodbridge is under a lockdown due to a shooting outside our facility. Prince William County Police are searching for a suspect and are not allowing buses to leave the bus yard. As a result, the first afternoon trips of the day (that normally meet at the Pentagon at 2:17 p.m.) will be delayed indefinitely.

Those passengers who need to leave work early and who are parked at Horner Road or Potomac Mills Mall can ride Metro to Franconia-Springfield and take the Prince William Metro Direct bus, which stops at those locations.

Manassas-bound passengers can take Metro to West Falls Church and board Manassas Metro Direct, which serves all the same local stops at the Manassas OmniRide bus.

Those who have parked at the PRTC Transit Center should be aware that access to parking lot is currently prohibited.

Currently, we do not know how long the lockdown will be in effect. We thank you for your patience during this time.

Further updates will be sent as soon as additional information becomes available.

Christine Rodrigo

From: riderexpress-bounces@prtctransit.org on behalf of Rider Express is your email hotline to all the latest news at PRTC. [riderexpress@prtctransit.org]
Sent: Monday, June 15, 2009 2:49 PM
To: riderexpress@prtctransit.org
Subject: [RiderExpress] OmniRide on ESP this Afternoon - sent 6/15 @ 2:48p.m.
Attachments: ATT374849.txt

**** Please do not respond to this e-mail address; it is used only by our automated alert systems and is not monitored for responses. Send responses to OMNI@OMNIRIDE.COM ****

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PRTC's OmniRide buses will operate on the Emergency Service Plan for the remainder of the day because the PRTC facility is on lockdown following a fatal shooting this morning outside the PRTC Transit Center in Woodbridge.

As a result, PRTC has made arrangements with several neighboring transit agencies to borrow buses and operators for the afternoon commute. Wait times at Metro may be longer than under normal ESP conditions because we don't have as many buses available as usual.

Because PRTC is borrowing buses for the commute, your bus probably will not say OmniRide. PRTC will have personnel at the Metro stations to direct passengers to the appropriate bus. No fares will be charged on OmniRide routes this afternoon.

Passengers returning to the eastern side of the county should ride Metro to the Franconia-Springfield Metro station, where buses will be waiting to pick up passengers. Those traveling to the Manassas area should ride Metro to the West Falls Church Metro station and meet the PRTC buses there.

The bus operators who are helping PRTC for the day may be unfamiliar with the route. PRTC is providing the operators with turn-by-turn instructions, and we ask you to offer directional assistance as needed.

Those who have parked at the PRTC Transit Center should be aware that access to the commuter parking lot is currently being searched. Once the search is completed, passengers will be able to access their vehicles.

We do not know how long our operations will be impacted by this tragic event. We thank you for your patience during this time.

Further updates will be sent as soon as additional information becomes available.

Christine Rodrigo

From: riderexpress-bounces@prtctransit.org on behalf of Rider Express is your email hotline to all the latest news at PRTC. [riderexpress@prtctransit.org]
Sent: Tuesday, June 16, 2009 4:08 PM
To: riderexpress@prtctransit.org
Subject: [RiderExpress] Thanks from PRTC and First Transit - sent 6/16 @4:07 p.m.

**** Please do not respond to this e-mail address; it is used only by our automated alert systems and is not monitored for responses. Send responses to OMNI@OMNIRIDE.COM ****

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PRTC wants to publicly thank the neighboring transportation providers and our passengers for their assistance in the aftermath of yesterday's fatal shooting that disrupted our bus services.

Once it became clear that PRTC buses would be unable to leave our property while the police investigation was underway, we contacted neighboring transportation providers for help bringing PRTC passengers home. We are enormously grateful for the assistance we received and would like to publicly thank WMATA, Fairfax Connector, FRED of Fredericksburg, Greyhound, and New World.

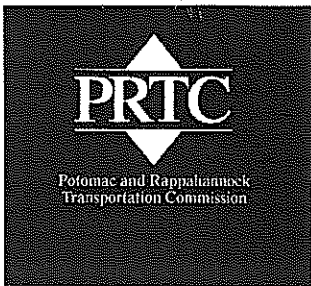
A public thank you is also in order for the help we received from VRE and the management of Potomac Mills Mall. VRE allowed PRTC passengers to ride for free on Monday afternoon, and Potomac Mills Mall allowed our local buses to temporarily coordinate transfers at the Mall while the PRTC Transit Center was off-limits.

And last but certainly not least, we also want to extend our gratitude to our passengers who demonstrated their patience and understanding on Monday. Your kind words and condolences during this difficult time are sincerely appreciated.

Our thoughts and sympathies are with the family and friends of the two victims, Darnell McPherson and William Earl Anderson Jr.

Some passengers have inquired about sending condolence cards to the family of Mr. McPherson, who was a First Transit operator working at PRTC. Cards may be sent to Mr. McPherson's family in care of First Transit, 14700 Potomac Mills Road, Woodbridge, VA 22192.

RiderExpress mailing list
RiderExpress@www.prtctransit.org
<http://www.prtctransit.org/mailman/listinfo/riderexpress>



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

Ms. Katherine Ichter
Director
Fairfax County Department of Transportation
4050 Legato Road
Suite 400
Fairfax, VA 22033

Dear Ms. Ichter:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), First Transit, and our customers, I am writing to thank you for all the assistance your Department and its contractors provided to PRTC in order to transport its customers home on Monday, June 15th. Less than two hours after we first sought assistance, Connector operators/buses, supervisors, and DOT staff were on site at both the Franconia/Springfield and West Falls Church Metro stations and our passengers were on their way home. It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope.

In particular, I would like to commend DOT staff members Skip Dunkle for making the necessary arrangements and Jose Pineda, Kris Miller, Andrew Suggs, and Christina Farrar for assisting PRTC and First Transit staff on site at Franconia and West Falls. Providing additional assistance were Veolia supervisors Randal Keeyes, Kim Huffman, Jagpreet Grewal, and Debbie Craig and, of course, none of this would have been possible without Connector bus operators.

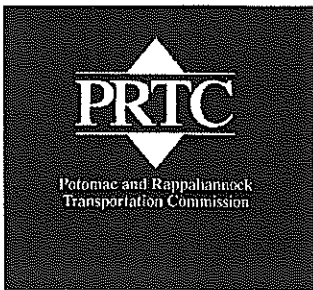
Thanks to a quick and professional response, we hardly skipped a beat and we have received numerous commendations on how smoothly everything went. Please know that if we can ever return the favor, we will be there for you. Let me close by saying that we are prepared to reimburse the County for expenses related to this assistance and ask that you direct the invoice to Director of Planning and Operations Eric Marx.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred H. Harf", is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

Ms. Kathleen Beck
Transit Manager
Fredericksburg Regional Transit
1400 Jefferson Davis Highway
Fredericksburg, VA 22401

Dear Ms. Beck:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), First Transit, and our customers, I am writing to thank you for the support you provided on Monday, June 15th. While we did not end up deploying FRED buses/operators, it is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis, we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope.

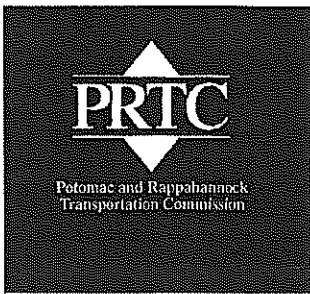
Please know that if we can ever return the favor, we will be there for you. Let me close by saying that we are prepared to reimburse FRT for expenses related to this assistance and ask that you direct the invoice to Director of Planning and Operations Eric Marx.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred H. Harf", is written over the typed name and title.

Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192


June 19, 2009

Ms. Caroline Barry-Green
Acting General Manager
Potomac Mills Mall
2700 Potomac Mills Circle
Suite 307
Prince William, VA 22192

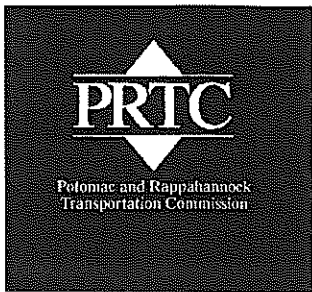
Dear Ms. Barry-Green:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and our customers, I am writing to thank you for allowing us to switch our bus service transfer operations to Potomac Mills during the crisis on Monday, June 15th. I understand from my staff that, without hesitation, you assented to this request -- it is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope. Thanks to your immediate, affirmative response and the help of multiple neighboring operators, we hardly skipped a beat.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am


Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

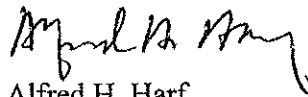
Mr. David Bolen
President
New World Tours, Inc.
7920 Gainsford Court
Bristow, VA 20136

Dear Mr. Bolen:

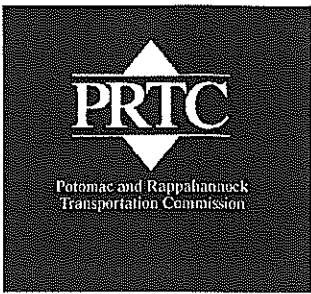
On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), First Transit, and our customers, I am writing to thank you for the support provided on Monday, June 15th. Less than two hours after we first sought assistance, a New World bus/operator was site at the West Falls Church Metro station and our passengers were on their way home. It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope.

In particular, I would like to commend Operations Manager/Safety Director Mart Bowman for making the necessary arrangements. Thanks to his quick and professional response and the assistance of multiple other transportation providers, we hardly skipped a beat and we have received numerous commendations on how smoothly everything went. Let me close by saying that we have received your invoice and payment is in process.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am


Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

Mr. John B. Catoe, Jr.
General Manager
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
600 5th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

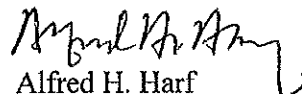
Dear Mr. Catoe:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), First Transit, and our customers, I am writing to thank you for all the assistance your organization provided on Monday, June 15th. Less than two hours after we first sought assistance, WMATA operators/buses and supervisors were on site at both the Franconia/Springfield and West Falls Church Metro stations and our passengers were on their way home. It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope.

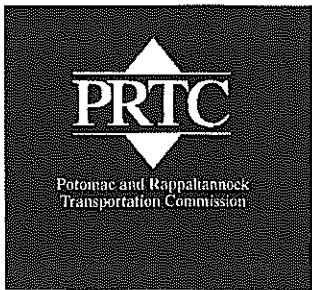
In particular, I would like to commend Bus Operations Central Control staff members Curtis Grady and Sheldon Battles for making the necessary arrangements, and Supervisors Luscious Rucker and Dale Fowler for assisting PRTC and First Transit staff on site at Franconia and West Falls. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the Metrobus operators.

Thanks to WMATA's and multiple other transportation providers' quick and professional response, we hardly skipped a beat, and we have received numerous commendations on how smoothly everything went. Please know that if we can ever return the favor, we will be there for you. Let me close by saying that we are prepared to reimburse WMATA for expenses related to this assistance and are awaiting an invoice.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am


Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

Mr. Adam T. McGavock
Director of Transportation Projects
Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
4350 North Fairfax Dr.
Suite 720
Arlington, VA 22203

Dear Mr. McGavock:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and our customers, I am writing to thank you for assistance provided during the crisis on Monday, June 15th. I understand from my staff that you assisted in posting signs at our Rosslyn route bus stops so our customers would know what was happening and where to go.

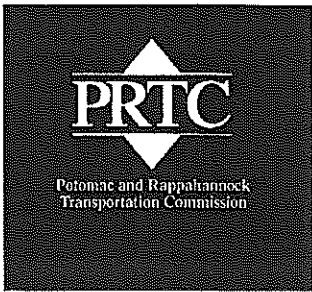
It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope. Thanks to your immediate, affirmative response and the help of multiple neighboring operators, we hardly skipped a beat.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred H. Harf", is written above the printed name.

Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

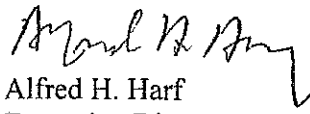
Mr. Dale Zehner
Chief Executive Officer
Virginia Railway Express
1500 King Street
Suite 202
Alexandria, VA 22314-2730

Dear Zehner:

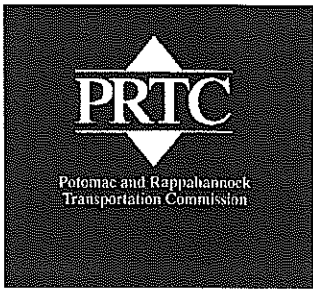
On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), First Transit, and our customers, I am writing to thank you for providing free rail service to our OmniRide bus customers during the crisis on Monday, June 15th. It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on VRE's assistance to help us cope.

Thanks to your immediate response and the help of multiple neighboring bus operators, we hardly skipped a beat.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am


Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

Mr. Buddy Ey
MATOC Facilitator
Telvent Farradyne Inc.
3206 Tower Oaks Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Mr. Ey:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and our customers, I am writing to thank you for assistance provided during the crisis on Monday, June 15th. I understand from my staff that you communicated our situation to regional agencies/organizations in an effort to seek mutual aid.

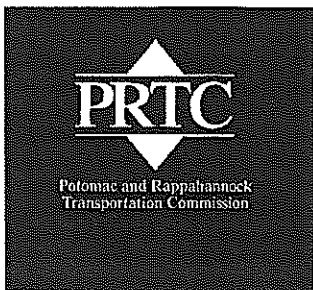
It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope. Thanks to your assistance and the help of multiple neighboring operators, we hardly skipped a beat.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred H. Harf", is positioned above the printed name.

Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

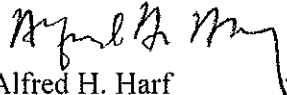
Mr. Marvin Thomas
Field Services Coordinator
Capital Wireless Information Net
6305 Ivy Lane
Suite 300
Greenbelt, Maryland 20770

Dear Mr. Thomas:

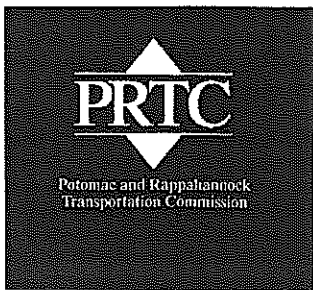
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It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope. Thanks to your assistance and the help of multiple neighboring operators, we hardly skipped a beat.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am


Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

Ms. Lynn M. Rivers
Metrobus & Metrorail Service Coordinator
Arlington County DOT
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Ms. Rivers:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), First Transit, and our customers, I am writing to thank you for assistance provided during the crisis on Monday, June 15th. I understand from my staff that, without even a request from us, you posted signs at our Rosslyn route bus stops and contacted Adam McGavock at NVTC to assist you.

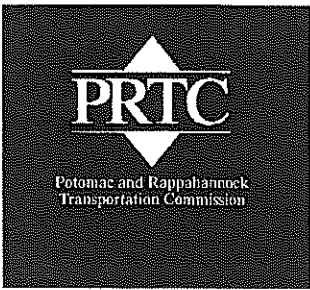
It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope. Thanks to your immediate response and the help of multiple neighboring operators, we hardly skipped a beat.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred H. Harf", is positioned above the printed name and title.

Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

Mr. Steve Yaffe
Transit Services Manager
Arlington County Transportation Division
Department of Environmental Services
2100 Clarendon Boulevard
Suite 900
Arlington, VA 22201

Dear Mr. Yaffe:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC), First Transit, and our customers, I am writing to thank you for your offer of assistance during the crisis on Monday, June 15th. I understand from Eric Marx that you offered to post signs at our Rosslyn route bus stops so our customers would know what was happening and where to go.

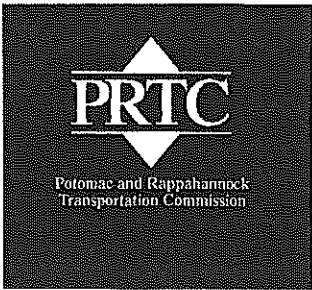
It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred H. Harf", is positioned above the printed name.

Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

Mr. Earl Lewis
Emergency Preparedness Coordinator
Maryland Transit Administration
1515 Washington Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21230

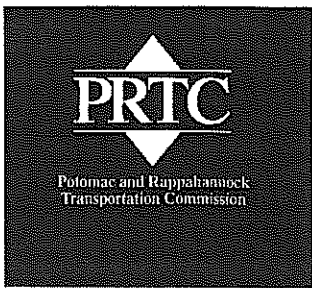
Dear Mr. Lewis:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and our customers, I am writing to thank you for your offer of assistance during the crisis on Monday, June 15th. I understand from my staff that you offered to provide Baltimore area buses/operators but, given the timing and distance, we opted to decline. Nevertheless, it is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am


Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell



14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

June 19, 2009

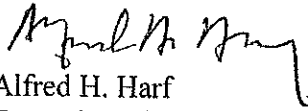
Ms. Sandy Modell
General Manager
Alexandria Transit Company
116 South Quaker Lane
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Ms. Modell:

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and our customers, I am writing to thank you for assistance provided during the crisis on Monday, June 15th. I understand from my staff that, without even a request from us, DASH staff notified PRTC passengers waiting at the Pentagon about the situation and directed them to the appropriate Metro stations.

It is a tremendous comfort to know that in a crisis we can count on our "neighbors" to help us cope. Thanks to your immediate response and the help of multiple neighboring operators, we hardly skipped a beat.

With heartfelt gratitude, I am


Alfred H. Harf
Executive Director

cc: Eric Marx
Robb Howell

The Washington Post

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Va. Bus Company Did Not Know About Driver's Criminal Record

By Jonathan Mummolo
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, June 20, 2009

A Woodbridge bus driver charged in a fatal shooting this week had prior convictions for crack cocaine possession, witness tampering and evidence tampering and served time in federal prison before he began driving buses for the Potomac and Rappahannock Transit Commission five years ago, court records show.

But Glenn K. Wade's criminal background was not discovered by the contractor First Transit before it hired him to drive PRTC buses in 2004, despite the company's policy of "extensive and intensive" background checks on its bus drivers, a First Transit spokeswoman said.

Wade, 40, was charged with murder this week in the shooting death of Darnell McPherson, 32, a fellow PRTC bus driver who was found near PRTC headquarters Monday morning. Another man, William E. Anderson Jr., 34, was found fatally shot nearby.

No one has been charged in Anderson's death, although police are investigating the possibility that the three men were engaged in a shootout near the headquarters, the main transfer point for passengers in eastern Prince William County.

First Transit spokeswoman Glenda Lamont said the company is working to independently confirm the 1999 convictions in U.S. District Court in Washington. If Wade has such a background, he should never have been hired, she said.

"If we had the information on that conviction, then he would not be working for us," Lamont said.

"Obviously, this is really concerning to us, because the safety and security of our passengers and our other employees is our highest priority," she said.

Lamont said that at the time Wade was hired in 2004, criminal background checks were made only in the county and state where the applicant lived, and in other localities if addresses were known. About a year ago, First Transit began doing nationwide searches.

Lamont said the company's background checks are performed by an outside security and information firm, USIS.

USIS spokesman Michael John said a subsidiary of the firm, HireRight, conducts background checks for First Transit but declined to discuss search results, citing confidentiality.

PRTC Executive Director Alfred Harf said the commission's contract with First Transit bars the hiring of any applicant with a felony conviction or drug or alcohol conviction. There are also restrictions on certain misdemeanor and traffic offenses. Lamont said bus drivers undergo drug and alcohol testing.

PRTC, which also oversees OmniLink and OmniRide buses, is not the first bus provider in the region to allow a felon behind the wheel.

A Metrobus driver, Jelani K. Slay -- who was fatally shot in March while trying to rob an off-duty police officer, authorities said -- spent nearly 11 years in prison after robbing two men at gunpoint in the mid-1990s. He was hired by Metro two months after being released in 2007, but because his last felony occurred more than a decade before he applied for a Metro job, his criminal record did not disqualify him from employment.

According to court records, Wade was spotted by police in 1998 in Southwest Washington tossing a bag under a parked car. Officers recovered the bag -- in which they found 47.7 grams of crack -- and placed it on the trunk of the car. At one point, Wade tossed the bag to his accomplice and shouted, "Run, dog, run! They can't catch you. They're slow!" the records state.

Wade was convicted of possession of five or more grams of cocaine base with the intent to distribute, witness tampering and evidence tampering. He served about 3 1/2 years in prison and was released in 2003.

A spokesman said Metro is working to strengthen its screening practices and hiring criteria, which currently include criminal background checks, drug and alcohol tests, and disqualification of applicants who have one felony conviction in the previous three years and two in the previous 10.

Fairfax Connector and Loudoun County Transit also have various restrictions on applicants with felony records, poor driving records and alcohol and drug violations.

Wade joined First Transit on April 5, 2004, and drove commuter buses for PRTC between Woodbridge and the District, according to Lamont and Christine Rodrigo, a PRTC spokeswoman. He was placed on suspension after he surrendered to police Monday, Lamont said.

Wade's attorney, Charles D. Smith, declined to comment when reached by phone yesterday.

Staff writer Del Quentin Wilber and staff researchers Meg Smith and Eddy Palanzo contributed to this report.

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