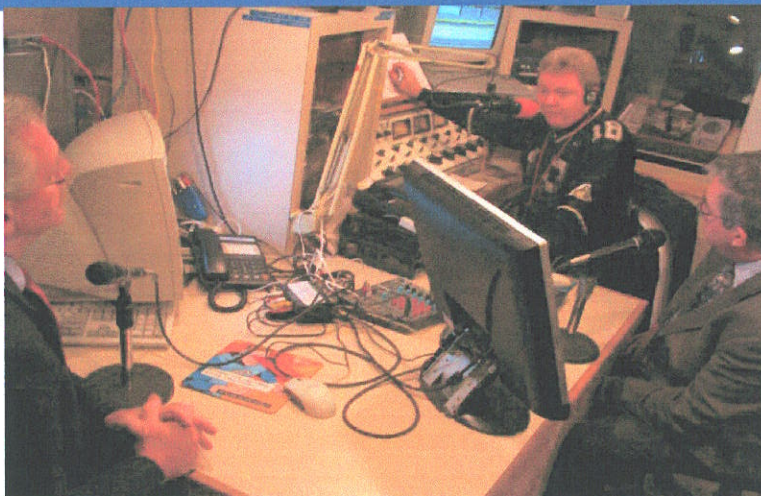


Dennis Rittenmeyer (left), and Ken Dallmeyer were interviewed by "Preacher" Steve Glover of WJOB on Jan. 22. The topic was RBA's plans for regional transit in Lake and Porter Counties.



## RBA to Choose Among Management Options

The Regional Bus Authority is to decide on one of two management options for a regional public transportation system: the Regional Operator Option or the Universal Operator Option. The major difference involves the treatment of existing and new local services. In the Regional Operator Option, the responsibility and control is shared between the RBA and local sponsors. In the latter, the RBA takes all responsibility and control for local services. However, regional routes remain the responsibility of the RBA under both options.

## Why Choose the Regional Option?

The RBA is responsible for regional services that provide connections between communities through routes and area-wide demand-response services. The RBA will be in charge of these service and may operate them either directly or through contracts with public, not-for-profit or private service providers.

Local governments fund existing transit routes and demand-response services. Under this option, the RBA will fund a major portion of service and share in the management of the

(Turn Over Page)

## Why Choose the Universal Option?

Under this option, the RBA will be fully in charge of local services as well as regional services. The RBA may operate local services directly or through contracts with public, not-for-profit or private service providers, possibly including the existing operators.

Given this direction, the RBA quickly places its own stamp on public transportation by offering efficient, consistent delivery. There is no sharing of accountability. In addition, new local services can be established

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## Key RBA Benefits

Key benefits from expanded public transit featured in the comprehensive plan and adopted recently by the Northwest Indiana Regional Development Authority include:

- Increase employment by nearly 7,000 jobs over the period to 2040
- Provide personal income growth of \$4.5 billion during this period
- Generate \$7.2 billion in additional economic activity during this period
- Increase the population in Lake and Porter Counties by approximately 8,670 persons during this period.

## A Call for the Regional Option

The Public Transportation Committee of the Lake County Good Government Initiative recently expressed support for the Regional Bus Authority. Recommendations included:

- The RBA Board should adopt the Regional Operator Option to improve public transportation, and as a necessary first step for creating a regional public transportation network...
- The RBA should investigate alternative regional funding mechanism(s) to provide the Regional Operator Option with the funding necessary to commence regional transportation activities and operations.

## President's Corner

## Key Vote For RBA Set for Feb. 21



By Dennis Rittenmeyer  
President, NWI Regional Bus Authority

On Feb. 21, the Regional Bus Authority (RBA) will vote on a very important issue. It is whether we, as the Regional Bus Authority, believe it is in the best interest of Northwest Indiana to have the RBA be a provider of "regional services," while helping to fund local services provided by different operators, or whether the RBA should serve as the "universal operator," providing both local and regional services.

There are political issues attendant to both options, and as well, there are significant financial differences. The RBA, as regional operator, would enable existing local services governed by local boards and elected officials to continue their operations. As universal operator, the RBA would take over all transit services. Obviously, elected officials, as well as the operators themselves and members of the boards of existing providers, all have strong views on these options.

With the RBA as a regional operator, local monies, amounting to approximately \$5M, would continue while new funding, amounting to approximately \$9M, would have to be found. Whereas, with the RBA as a universal operator, current local funding would cease, and the RBA would have to obtain new funding amounting to approximately \$14M.

Either of these two management options will work. In other words, they represent two options to accomplish the same goal. Meanwhile, the RBA has held numerous public meetings and "listening sessions" in Lake and Porter Counties.

The messages we have received have been very clear and unambiguous. Users of transit services want more frequent service, better on-time service, and service that will take them to destinations outside their own community. Non-riders and, as well, important governmental stakeholders want the service to be efficient, economical, and competently managed.

The question for the RBA to answer is which one is best and can be accomplished in the shortest period of time to ensure our citizens will finally receive the transit services they deserve.

## Why Choose the Regional Option?

(From Other Side)

service by providing oversight. The policy board of the local provider would continue to control the service. The RBA's input and control will be through a contract with a city or agency, which gives the RBA leverage in return for the funding provided.

The RBA will also offer sponsors of new local services the same arrangement where the RBA funds a portion of the service through a management-sharing contract. This option offers a path for creating an integrated regional service as a first step toward a unified system.

## Why Choose the Universal Option?

(From Other Side)

where needed and where they best support regional service without needing a local sponsor. Existing local services can be modified as needed.

The RBA as a Universal Operator will be more efficient and eliminate administrative duplication.

This option offers substantial relief for the local governments that need relief the most faced with the property tax cap and other challenges.

## RBA: Choices Turn on 'Core' Issues for Public Transit

The choices facing the Regional Bus Authority rest on the foundation that public transportation can and should be improved based upon the following core principles, according to Ken Dallmeyer, Project Director:

- Increased investment
- Routes that link communities in the region together
- Coordinated regional demand-response services
- Regional marketing, coordination and planning of services
- The need for a unified bus public transportation system.

## RBA Board Members

### Officers

Dennis Rittenmeyer, PhD.,  
President  
Kathy Willman  
Vice-President  
Rev. Asher Harris  
Secretary  
Lynn Duttlinger,  
Treasurer

### Lake County Representatives

Daryl E. Lampkins  
Corey Surrent  
Keith Matasovsky  
Tom O'Donnell  
Robert Crossk  
Michael Troxell  
Dan Klein

Ruby Powell-Flowers

Mark Kalwinski

Tim Brown

Roosevelt Allen, Jr.

Renee Iovino

Charles Barbour

### Porter County Representatives

Jeff Chidester

Tim Sullivan

Russell Franzman

### Ex-Officio Members

La Porte County

Leigh Morris, La Porte

Charles Oberlie, Michigan  
City

Gary/Chicago International Airport  
Chris Curry

### Project Director

Kenneth E. Dallmeyer  
(219) 762-4767

## Porter County Trustee on RBA



Russell Franzman, serving as the Boone Township trustee in Porter County, has been named to the Regional Bus Authority.

He represents nine townships, succeeding Bob Wichlinski. Mr. Franzman is president of Russ' Print Shop and the Advertiser, Inc. He and his wife, Sue, are residents of Hebron.