Everyone welcomes the arrival of our State bird, the American Robin, as a pure sign that spring is here or at least what the robin represents: the promise that the weather will be more spring-like in the upcoming weeks. And isn’t it wonderful to see the goldfinches feasting on thistle, to hear the spring peepers chorus at dusk and to occasionally catch a glimpse of a red fox traversing the neighboring forest...these animals are all migrants or travelers...they need to be somewhere at a certain time for a certain purpose....just like all of us! We are all migrants or travelers......we rely on our transportation and transit systems to get us where we need to be.

But the truth is the return of the robin represents even a deeper meaning: the innate purpose of sustaining its species through successful breeding.

Oddly, WTS CT Valley Chapter has a similar purpose. Our organization’s primary goal is to help breed women to “advance in the transportation industry”. So we have decided to move forward and start to develop two very important programs, the Mentorship Program and the Scholarship Program. These key programs will focus on the young women of Connecticut who are beginning to or already studying or working in the transportation industry.

With a Mentorship Program in place our Chapter can offer personal and professional development opportunities for members and support women in the transportation industry by assisting them with fulfilling their career goals. The intention of the Mentorship Program is to encourage “seasoned” professionals to work together with young professionals as a TEAM to achieve the goals they develop and outline together.

Yes, this is a commitment but it is a commitment that can reap so many rewards for both the mentor and the apprentice.

The formation of the Chapter Scholarship Program is also underway and our goal is to present a scholarship award at next year’s Annual Award Dinner in March! We are hoping that our members help us accomplish this important program by attending and supporting our upcoming programs.

Theresa Albanese-Pereyo,
WTS CT Valley Chapter President
Social Mixer and Board Meeting – April 19, 2007 – Both Sad and Exciting, The CT Valley Board hosted a Social Mixer at the lounge of the Marriott Hotel in Rocky Hill. This meeting was both sad and exciting. Ms. Sara Capps who has been a huge help taking on the role of secretary in January 2007 attended her last WTS Connecticut Valley Board Meeting as she headed off to Nashville, Tennessee. Sara has assisted the board in many ways including attending meetings, preparing minutes, maintaining the chapter mailing list and compiling the chapter newsletter. She also contributed to several creative ideas which has assisted in the success of this chapter. Sara will be missed. As she leaves, the board wishes her much success in her new ventures.

The meeting also drew some excitement when Ms. Shawna Bartkus of Dewberry kindly agreed to begin the process of setting up one of the first scholarship programs with WTS CT Valley. In the past CT Valley members have contributed funds to this program, however, it has been many years since scholarships have been awarded. Shawna, we would like to thank you for your extraordinary efforts in volunteering your time and energy toward this end.

We will be accepting applications for receipt of a WTS Scholarship to be presented at the annual awards banquet that will be scheduled for May 2008. If you would like to assist Shawna in her efforts or have ideas for this program, please feel free to contact her at sbartkus@dewberry.com or any of the board listed on the back page of this newsletter.

WTS Co-Sponsors Public Transportation Breakfast at the Capitol
The CT Valley Chapter of WTS hosted a legislative breakfast at the State Capitol Building on February 28, 2007. The event, co-sponsored with the Connecticut Association for Community Transportation (CACT), focused on the importance of investing in Connecticut’s public transportation services.

Theresa Albanese-Pereyo, WTS CT Valley Chapter President, welcomed attendees, which included speakers James Boice, Connecticut Department of Transportation Deputy Commissioner, and State Senator and Chief Assistant Majority Leader Donald DeFronzo. State Senator DeFronzo is also co-chair of the legislature’s Transportation Committee, along with State Representative Antonio Guerrera, who also attended the legislative breakfast.

Presenter Gloria Mills, CACT Executive Director, advocated for $79.5 million in bus transit operating funds ($12.7 million per year over the next five years). This funding would benefit communities in Connecticut by improving access and mobility, enhancing job access, supporting economic development, and reducing traffic congestion and air pollution. Capital investments are also needed ($43 million per year) for the purchase of new vehicles, parking for express bus services, and the implementation of bus rapid transit projects, and expanded facilities.

The joint WTS-CACT legislative breakfast is an annual event, this year attended by about 75 people.

AMERICANS TOOK 10.1 BILLION TRIPS ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION LAST YEAR
PUBLIC TRANSIT USE IS UP 30 PERCENT SINCE 1995

In early March, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) announced that Americans took 10.1 billion trips on local public transportation in 2006 - the first time in 49 years. Over the last decade, public transportation's growth rate outpaced the growth rate of the population and the growth rate of vehicle miles traveled on our nation's highways.

Public transit use is up 30 percent since 1995. That is more than double the growth rate of the population (12 percent) and higher than the growth rate for the vehicle miles traveled on our roads (24 percent) during that same period. In 2006, public transit ridership grew 2.9 percent over 2005. To put the 10.1 billion public transportation trips in perspective, transit trips outnumber domestic airline trips by 15 to 1.

Public transportation is a proven way to meet our nation's goals," said APTA's President William Millar. "As Congress looks to find ways to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil and reduce emissions causing global warming, we call on them to increase investment and include incentives to encourage further use of public transportation."

This article was taken from Center for Transportation Excellence.
Annual Awards Program – March 1, 2007, The Awards Program held at the Holiday Inn in North Haven was a great success. WTS Connecticut Valley honored Ms. Judy Gott as the 2006 Woman of the Year. Ms. Gott is the Executive Director for the South Central Regional Council of Governments (SCRCOG). She graciously accepted the award and was very humbled to be considered. Ms. Gott addressed the audience with a bright outlook on transportation issues in her jurisdiction. Her sense of humor was well received by the audience as she discussed transportation issues as they related to scheduling projects. Additionally Ms. Gott has agreed to support the efforts of advancing women in transportation.

Dewberry was the 2005 Employer of the Year and George Jacob’s of Dewberry introduced URS as the 2006 Employer of the Year. Mr. Jacobs sense of humor toward their competitor put real spice into the air.

Finally Sofia Nirshberg was surprised by the announcement that she was being awarded the 2006 Member of the Year. The board agreed that it was a good idea to keep this a secret and well worth the surprise on Sofia’s face. Ms. Nirshberg currently sits on the board as immediate past president; she served CT Valley from 2005–2006. Previous to this work, Sofia was an active member of CT Valley and during her presidency became very involved with WTS International and lead the chapter in a positive direction. Sofia truly enjoys working toward the effort of advancing women in the transportation industry and this is clear as she successfully runs her own engineering firm in Connecticut, New York and RI. When excepting the award, Ms. Nirshberg had the audience laughing as she expressed her dismay in not knowing of this honor and if she did she would have invited her husband and possibly even worn a gown.

Once the program was completed, our guests stayed to network and socialize. It was a good evening and one that resulted in some new memberships and expanded membership interest. Thanks to all who attended, our program committee chair, and the hard work of the entire board!

Annual Luncheon with Connecticut DOT Commissioner Carpenter— Over 100 in Attendance, May 16, 2007, The CT Valley Chapter held its Annual Luncheon. The guest speaker, Mr. Ralph J. Carpenter, Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT), spoke on his role at the agency and the challenges and opportunities the agency is currently facing. He also noted the vital contributions of women, from all levels, at ConnDOT. The Annual Luncheon was attended by over 100 people, one of the Chapter's most successful events ever. Ms. Theresa Albanese-Pereyo, CT Valley Chapter President, said of the Annual Luncheon, "The CT Valley Chapter Board of Directors is very pleased that so many of our members were able to attend this event at which Commissioner Ralph Carpenter spoke about this critical time at the Connecticut Department of Transportation."

The CT Valley Chapter was honored by the participation of WTS International President Ann Koby. In her address to attendees, Ms. Koby noted the contributions of women in transportation throughout history. She shared how WTS was originally started by forty women in Washington D.C. thirty years ago. She shared highlights of WTS International’s Strategic Plan and noted our mission of advancing women in transportation.

The Annual Meeting, facilitated by CT Valley Chapter Vice President Laurel Stegina, immediately followed the Annual Luncheon. Ms Albanese-Pereyo noted that one of the purposes of the Annual Meeting is “to encourage all of our members to support the Chapter by becoming a committee chair, by enlisting as a mentor or an apprentice in the newly-forming Mentorship Program, or by volunteering to help out in some other way.”
STATE SENATOR DONALD J. DEFRONZO, TRANSIT FOR CONNECTICUT RELEASE BUS STUDY

Study advocates for five-year operating proposal and investment plan - Joined by representatives from the Transit for Connecticut Coalition, lawmakers, and advocates at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford, state Senator Donald J. DeFronzo (D-New Britain), chair of the General Assembly's Transportation Committee, unveiled a study that advocates for a broad-ranging package of enhancements to reduce traffic congestion, create healthier communities, and aid the economy through bus transit.

"Compared to other states in the Northeast with similar operating environments, Connecticut's per capita investment in mass transit is lacking," said Senator DeFronzo. "Bus transit, especially when coupled with increased and efficient rail systems, has the potential to dramatically enhance our economy, our livelihoods, and our environment if the state is willing to adequately invest in it."

The "Transit for Connecticut Bus Study" recommends a five-year investment plan that would increase bus ridership by as much as 80 percent through:

- Increased operating hours and frequency of service on heavily used and overcrowded routes
- Increased weekend bus service
- Expanded Dial-A-Ride options
- More commuter connections with rail stations
- Expanded express bus service to major employment centers
- Increased interregional service to improve access to jobs

"Bus transit is a key component in maintaining and improving the state's economic vitality," said Transit for CT Coalition Coordinator Karen Burnaska. "The study offers a balanced and diverse package of enhancements to bus service that will benefit CT residents, employers, and employees."

"Improved bus service linked to investments in rail will enhance the economic outlook for CT," said Joseph McGee, vice president, public policies and programs for the Business Council of Fairfield County, "by reducing congestion on our highways and encouraging employers to grow jobs in CT."

The study recommends $12.7 million per year for five years to cover operating expenses, including driver costs, fuel, dispatching, administration, and maintenance; and an additional $49 million per year for five years for capital expenses, including equipment and facility purchases.

The American Public Transportation Association has demonstrated that households that are likely to use public transportation on a given day save over $6,200 annually when compared to households with no access to mass transit. Additional studies have shown that every $1 invested in transit can yield up to $3 in economic benefit. Article taken from the Ct Democrats website dated 3-19-07.

Interested in becoming more involved in WTS?

Prospective members and current members are always welcome at our monthly board meetings. Please contact any of the board members for more information.

We have three open committee chair positions: CT Valley Committee Co-Chairs, for Programs, Newsletter and By-laws. If you would like to become more involved in the chapter, consider volunteering on one of these committees or just attend the monthly board meetings listed on the front cover. We could really use the help and love new ideas. Join us and it will be an outstanding experience!
NEW HAVEN — According to a recentTelecommute Connecticut survey, more than 158,000 Connecticut residents work from home at least one day a month — an 86 percent jump from just five years ago.

“This is exciting news that supports the state's goals to help decrease traffic congestion, energy consumption and air pollution,” said Jean Stimolo, program manager forTelecommute Connecticut — a Connecticut Department of Transportation program that provides employers with free assistance to design, develop and implement telecommuting programs.

“We're thrilled with what we've learned from our most recent survey,” said Stimolo. “The results confirm our belief that telecommuting is gaining traction throughout the state.”

The new findings demonstrate that telecommuting does in fact work. Ninety-five percent of the people surveyed are positive about telecommuting for various reasons, mentioning work/life balance, enjoyment and not having to commute as the three leading benefits. For employers, productivity gains (38.2%), reduced turnover (34.5%) and reduced traffic/congestion (25.5%) account for top benefits stated by employers.

“We're pleased with these numbers,” said Commissioner Ralph J. Carpenter of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT). “Nearly 60,000 cars are off our roadways every day. The fewer cars on the roadways, the less traffic congestion, which leads to a host of benefits, including reduced pollution and energy consumption. The bottom line is the State, employers and employees all see benefits.”

“The survey gives a clear picture of the viability of telecommuting in CT,” said Stimolo. Telecommute Connecticut looks forward to helping even more employers get the benefits of telecommuting and become an employer of choice.

Anyone interested in learning more is encouraged to visitwww.telecommuteCT.com or callTelecommute Connecticut at 800.255.7433.

Welcome
New Members!

Shawna Bartkus — Dewberry
Nancy Rolfe — DMJM Harris
Tamara Gray — Washington Group
Isabella Quagliato — Dewberry
Sandra Stavola — PB Americas
Julie Viera — Beta Group Inc.

WTS RI Chapter’s Golf Outing

Friday June 22, 2007
The Rolling Greens Golf Course,
Rhode Island.

If you are interested in participating please contact Terri Albanese-Pereyo prior to June 19 for further details.

CT TRANSPORTATION NEWS

Two DOT Deputy Commissioners, Charles Urso of South Windsor and Carl Bard of Vernon, have retired. They are succeeded by Raeanne Curtis, formerly the Chief of Staff in the Department of Public Works, and James Boice, formerly Interim Chief of DOT’s Bureau of Public Transportation.
Connecticut Embraces Practice Of Telecommuting, New Survey Says, continued from page 5

Based on total statewide employment, it is estimated there are approximately 158,000 telecommuters in Connecticut, compared to an estimated 85,260 in December 2001. This equates to an 86% increase.

Nine percent of Connecticut residents telecommute.

One out of three Connecticut residents work from home at least occasionally.

About Telecommute Connecticut

Telecommute Connecticut, a commuter service of the Connecticut Department of Transportation, provides employers with free assistance to design, develop and implement telecommuting programs. The overall goal of the state program is to decrease traffic congestion, energy consumption and air pollution throughout the state. For more information, contact 1-800-255-7433.

*Cited from the “Connecticut Business Industry Association 2006 Fairfield /Westchester County Business Survey.”

WTS Management Leadership Training

Each year, WTS International offers Management Training for its Chapter Leaders. In 2007, the Management Leadership Training took place from February 22nd–24th in Houston, Texas. The training, attended this year by Chapter Vice President Laurel Stegina, included sessions in chapter financial management and governance, communications and public relations, events planning, recruitment and retention of members, and succession planning.

One of the training sessions was about Mentorship Programs, of the newest and freshest professional development services offered by many Chapters, including the Phoenix, Colorado, Puget Sound, and New York. Although each Chapter’s Mentorship Program is a little different, the core elements involve the pairing of a senior-level professional with a junior-level professional for the purposes of sharing experience and knowledge for the overall goal of advancing women in the transportation industry. The CT Chapter is kicking-off its Mentorship Program in 2007, and plans to build upon the “lessons learned” from its sister chapters!

Beyond the training sessions and even the informal sharing of ideas, professional relationships and lasting friendships were forged during the training session!

Scenes from the WTS International Strategic Planning Session held during the leadership training.
Visit WTS Online!

The WTS International website contains a vast array of information about the WTS mission, goals, and history. You can also join or renew your membership! Additionally you can find all the news and information on 42 chapters across the US and Internationally in Canada and England. So check us out WTS online at www.wtsinternational.org.

MEMBERS ON THE MOVE!

Janette Sadik-Khan’s formerly of PB has been appointed New York City Department of Transportation Commissioner. As transportation commissioner, Janette will have as her mission putting in place the transportation-oriented initiatives that are part of the mayor’s program for keeping the city environmentally sound. She’s joining Mayor Bloomberg’s administration at a time when the city is considering congestion charging, upgrades to existing transit systems, and new transit options. We would like to wish her all the best.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM INFORMATIONAL MEETING

The CT Valley Chapter invites its members and prospective members to attend an informational and planning meeting for its newly forming Mentorship Program on June 20th from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Marriott Hartford Rocky Hill. Come find out what’s involved in becoming a mentor or an apprentice and how you can benefit from this exciting professional development opportunity! Contact one of our Board members for more information.

WTS CT Valley Board — 2007

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