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Public Awareness Project

TC-NTSCOE

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Good morning, and thank you all for coming to our first annual NTSCOE Symposium. I am the Project Manager of the Engagement of Minority Communities in Public Awareness Programs.

One important aspect of working on a research project is it can be daunting and time consuming but rewarding as well. Well, I am fortunate to have all the troubles and some of the rewards of my efforts. Although, it has been challenging it has been a good learning experience.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) established the National Transportation Security Center of Excellence (NTSCOE) within its Science and Technology Directorate (S&T), Office of University Programs of which Tougaloo College was lead on a grant for security awareness.

I will present an overview of the research project. The *Engagement of Minority Communities in Public Awareness Programs (EMCAPS)* is a collaborative effort of three of the seven NTSCOE institutions: Tougaloo College; the Center for Transportation Safety, Security and Risk at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; and the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) at San José State University.

EMCAPS Research Questions

- **Are existing campaigns for public security in mass transit systems reaching minority communities?**
- **What is the current level of engagement of minority ridership in awareness campaigns?**
- **What are the effective strategies for engaging minorities in security awareness?**

The research team approached the research project by first conducting a literature review. You will hear more about the literature review this afternoon from Dr. Kahn.

- **Literature Review**
 - **General**

- **Historical Review of *Transit Watch* and *See Something, Say Something***
- **Interviews with representative agencies**
 - **MARTA**
 - **CTA**
 - **WMATA**
- **Focus Groups – MARTA riders in Atlanta**

Phase I of the EMCAPS project explored the reach and impact of public transit security awareness campaigns on the African American market segment.

The Literature Review revealed

- **Security Awareness Campaigns are common across the country as part of a transit agency's overall counterterrorism efforts**
- **Materials often feature diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, and many provide in Spanish and other languages**
- **None focus on minority communities specifically**

- **It is not clear whether separate campaigns should be designed for different demographic groups**

The Interviews

The host transit agency was the Metropolitan Atlanta Transit Authority (MARTA). The initial phase of the project would focus on the African American community in Atlanta, Georgia.

Agency interviews with MARTA were conducted with Police, marketing, research, community outreach and Command Center. Focus groups were conducted with transit riders in Atlanta and three additional interviews were conducted with WMATA of Washington, D. C., CTA and NY Police.

Agency Interview Findings

- **All three agencies have been conducting security awareness campaigns in one form or another since 9/11**
 - **Key campaign materials include posters in vehicles and stations, announcements, videos, and brochures**
 - **Security awareness message also incorporated into community outreach efforts**

- **African Americans comprise a significant market segment of transit riders according to agency demographics**
- **Campaigns are generic**
 - **Apply to both bus and rail**
 - **No specific market segment of transit riders**
 - **Only customization involves translating brochure into multiple languages based on service area demographics**
- **Campaigns compete for exposure with other agency public information requirements and advertising revenue needs**
 - **Minimum number of posters, announcements, and brochures**
 - **Level of effort driven by available space and other market factors**
 - **Refreshed approaches every few years or in response to current events**
 - ***See Something, Say Something* message reinforces crime prevention and terrorist awareness efforts**
- **View public security awareness campaigns as a foundational component of counterterrorism efforts**
- **Measure campaign effectiveness anecdotally**
 - **Some spikes in call volumes after publicized security incidents or concentrated campaign efforts**
 - **Specific incidents of passenger reports providing relevant information**
 - **Customer feedback**
- **Desire more systematic evaluation data, but not a priority given limited resources**

The MARTA Focus Groups

- **Six focus groups conducted with frequent MARTA riders in April**
 - **Four African Americans**
 - **Two General Market**
 - **The majority of participants in all groups have used public transit in other U.S. cities and several were familiar with some international systems**
- **Focus groups are a form of qualitative research**
 - **Exploratory in nature**
 - **Provide opportunity to identify key issues and concerns within a given population for further investigation and follow-up**
 - **Not scientific and should not be used to draw inferences about the population as a whole**

- **The research confirmed the message of security awareness is reaching the African American Riders, especially African Americans, are aware of their surroundings**
 - **Focused more personal safety issues such as harassment, robbery, lewd behavior, etc.**
 - **Terrorism is not a top concern**
 - **Do not believe Atlanta, and particularly MARTA are terrorist targets**
- **African Americans particularly, believe MARTA is responsible for securing the system, but are open to a “team” approach if they see their input is valued**
- **Existing MARTA security messages are reaching riders**
 - **Posters/video in vehicles and announcements in stations appeared to be most memorable**
 - **Low unaided recall of *See Something, Say Something* tag line but high familiarity when mentioned**
 - **Riders had very low awareness of the number to call to make a report**
- **A variety of factors affect an individual’s willingness to make a report**
 - **Perceptual factors**
 - **Level of perceived threat**
 - **Anticipated inconvenience**
 - **Past interactions with agency personnel (i.e., response to complaints or other inquiries)**
 - **Logistical factors**
 - **Accessibility of police or other agency personnel**
 - **Knowledge of the number to call**
 - **Availability of cell phone service**
- **Reactions to sample posters varied across groups**
 - **The canine poster was rated favorably by members of all groups**
 - **African Americans preferred the MARTA poster, while the General Market participants felt the graphic did not relate to security**
- **Both groups agreed that an effective poster should:**
 - **Be visually appealing with limited text**
 - **Give examples on what to look for**
 - **Promote one simple number to call**
 - **Provide option to that enables riders to discreetly make a report via a text message**
- **In Summary the initial research suggests security awareness campaigns are reaching African Americans**

- **Generally, transit riders are alert to what is going on around them, but somewhat reluctant to make reports**
 - **Tolerant of unusual behavior**
 - **Apprehensive about getting involve unless immediate threat**
 - **Concerned about falsely reporting someone**
 - **Want more guidance on what to look for relative to terrorism**
 - **African Americans may be initially less likely to make reports**
 - **African American men are more likely to try to handle a situation themselves rather than call for help**
 - **African Americans have less confidence in government's ability to provide security, and their perception of security is dramatically less favorable compared to other demographic groups**
 - **Engagement of African Americans in security awareness campaigns depends on a demonstrative response to their concerns**
 - **Overall, the effectiveness of existing security awareness campaigns for all market segments can be enhanced**
 - **Simplify reporting mechanisms**
 - **Address technical issues limiting riders' ability to communicate with police/agency employees**
 - **Link security awareness campaigns with other customer service initiatives**
 - **Refine media based on rider feedback**

Based upon the research the team achieved the research objectives.

Phase II: would investigate Impact of a new campaign

- **field research is needed to measure the impact of specific initiative on transit riders, which were to research the**
 - **Overall receptiveness to a campaign**
 - **Differences between African American and General Market**
 - **Validate initial set of Phase I findings, and**
 - **Contribute to existing body of knowledge regarding public awareness campaigns**

Phase II of the research project involves a partnership with *The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)* in conjunction with the *Greater National Capital Region (NCR) See Something, Say Something Campaign* to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign in engaging African Americans.

The projected overview of the “See Something, Say Something” campaign is to raise awareness of potential indicators of terrorism, crime and other threats and emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activity.

Thank You.