

Research group focuses on economics of transportation needs for rural elderly

27 June 2017, by Blair Fannin

A multidisciplinary team of researchers is examining economic issues associated with providing transportation for the rural elderly and other socially disadvantaged populations.

The aging baby boomer population is increasing the importance of mobility issues, including transportation, to society, the researchers said, also noting studies are needed to examine potential alternatives to increase the mobility of the elderly including both private and public alternatives.

"There are several reasons why the elderly proportion of the rural [population](#) is increasing, including aging in place, people retiring to rural areas and outmigration of young people," said Dr. James Mjelde, research team leader and professor of agricultural economics at Texas A&M University in College Station. "As people are living longer, transportation for healthcare and other needs becomes even more paramount."

Rural residents are sometimes forced to make the difficult decision of staying in place or moving closer to healthcare and other services. The team hopes their research recommendations will help enhance rural transportation options to improve the quality of life for elderly and other disadvantaged individuals.

"Rural transportation providers are looking at innovative solutions," said Dr. Rebekka Dudensing, research team co-member and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist in College Station. "It's clear that there is no single issue or solution that addresses the spectrum of rural transit districts."

Research recommendations include: improving the basic understanding of the needs of rural transit; how individual needs translate into broader community issues; how the adoption of innovative solutions and information technology might

improve the coordination, management and efficiency of rural transit systems.

Specific recommendations are in the report titled, "Economics of Transportation Research Needs for Rural Elderly and Transportation Disadvantaged Populations" available at [static.tti.tamu.edu/tti.tamu.e ... ments/TTI-2017-1.pdf](http://static.tti.tamu.edu/tti.tamu.edu/documents/TTI-2017-1.pdf)

Provided by Texas A&M University

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