

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and
Social Sciences

Great Plains Studies, Center for

February 1991

**Review of *Transportation Service to Small Rural Communities:
Effects of Deregulation*, by John F. Due, Benjamin J. Allen, Mary R.
Kihl, and Michael R. Crumm**

L. Orlo Sorenson
Kansas State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch>



Part of the [Other International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Sorenson, L. Orlo, "Review of *Transportation Service to Small Rural Communities: Effects of Deregulation*, by John F. Due, Benjamin J. Allen, Mary R. Kihl, and Michael R. Crumm" (1991). *Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*. 15.

<https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/greatplainsresearch/15>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Great Plains Studies, Center for at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Plains Research: A Journal of Natural and Social Sciences by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

ecology and, probably more importantly, how far we need to go.

These authors, most of whom live and work on the prairie, have produced a book that is both easy to read and useful. It summarizes a large body of knowledge about fire in the Great Plains for the first time. For these reasons and the economical price, I recommend that all students of grasslands purchase this book. **Jane H. Bock**, *Department of E.P.O. Biology, University of Colorado, Boulder.*

Transportation Service to Small Rural Communities: Effects of Deregulation. John F. Due, Benjamin J. Allen, Mary R. Kihl, and Michael R. Crumm. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1990. viii + 223 pp. Tables and references. \$29.95 cloth (ISBN 0-8138-0315-3).

This excellent book deals with transportation service interaction between carriers (providers of rail, truck, bus, and airplane service) and the users of those services in low traffic density markets. The book educates the reader rather than attempting to persuade the reader to a point of view. It deals largely with changes occurring in transport regulation and technology in the decade of the 1980s and their impacts on services to smaller communities.

Following the introduction the authors devote a chapter to each of the four indicated transport systems. In each chapter, a historical perspective of the role of the particular mode of transportation is presented, followed by discussion of government activity (regulation or promotion) designed to improve its function, availability, and economic visibility. The concluding chapter deals with strategies for adequate transportation service to small communities. The discussion deals with policies affecting carrier supply of services of various types.

The impacts of policies concerning public investment in transportation infrastructure are generally not dealt with directly. For example, the impact of the 42,500-mile interstate highway system is recognized as having reduced the cost (presumably to the shipper) of the abandonment of rail branch lines, but is not evaluated in any detail.

Substantial rail branch line abandonment occurred in the decade of the 1980s. The authors consider at some length the conditions leading to abandonment, the procedures for review of abandonment proposals, and options that shippers may consider following branch line abandonment. Trucks, busses, and private automobiles now provide many of the services once provided by railroads. However, communities that depend upon inbound or outbound shipments of grain, minerals, or lumber may be

severely impacted by the loss of rail service.

Interstate trucking was initially placed under federal economic regulation in 1935. Major deregulation occurred with passage of the Motor Carrier Act of 1980. The authors cite several studies indicating relatively little negative affect on truck service following deregulation. Cost impacts were either neutral or positive. Competition from private trucking and from potential new entries in for-hire trucking tend to contain cost and maintain quality of service in trucking.

Bus service is frequently the only affordable and manageable intercity transport service available to elderly or otherwise physically-restricted persons in small communities. However, following persistent declines in ridership, only 42% of small towns had access to intercity bus service in 1978. The Bus Regulatory Reform Act of 1982 has resulted in relaxed entry into intercity bus markets and public/private experimentation to provide service. However, the authors report little or no benefit to small communities even six years after the act.

Trends in small community air service is explored thoroughly in this book. Air service was deregulated in 1978. Availability of air service is a valued characteristic for communities attempting to expand and grow. Since initial regulation of air service a prime objective of federal agencies has been to promote and expand the service. Public policies still promote essential air service wherever possible.

In the final chapter the authors bring together the variety of transportation needs of local communities, the service capabilities of various modes of transportation, and potential resources of public agencies to recommend strategies for adequate transport service to smaller communities. The insights of the authors are well worth serious study for public officials and private citizens interested in community development and in prospects for transport service to accommodate those communities. L. Orlo Sorenson, *Department of Economics, Kansas State University.*

Agricultural Bioethics: Implications of Agricultural Biotechnology. Steven M. Gendel, A. David Kline, D. Michael Warren, and Faye Yates, Eds. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1990. xxiv + 357 pp. Tables, index, endnotes, and illustrations. \$32.95 cloth (ISBN 0-8138-0129-X).

This book is largely the product of a series of faculty discussions and a symposium held at Iowa State University in 1987. It represents a comprehensive treatment of the safety and regulatory issues, economic prospects, social considerations, and ethical dilemmas emerging from