



in transit

St. Cloud Metro Bus drivers dominate Minnesota Bus Roadeo

ALBERT LEA – The 22nd annual Minnesota Bus Roadeo was held on Saturday, July 25th in Albert Lea. Hosted by Albert Lea Transit, this year’s theme was “Between the Lakes,” highlighting the natural beauty surrounding the Roadeo course. Thirty transit organizations from around the state were represented by 49 drivers.

The event began Friday night with registration and a mixer that featured a DVD of 2008 Large Bus Division winner Duane Dufner of St. Cloud Metro Bus, while he competed on the American Public Transit Association of America’s National Roadeo course.

The competition was kicked off with an opening ceremony featuring the Albert Lea Veterans of Foreign Wars Color Guard and inspirational words from Albert Lea Transit Director, Garry Hart and Mike Schandauer of Mn/DOT’s Office of Transit.

In addition to the Roadeo



competition, participants took an STS certified training course, “Customer Service: The Next Level,” taught by St. Cloud Metro Bus Trainer, Kate Boelter.

The 22nd annual Minnesota Statewide Bus Roadeo was concluded with drivers being honored at an awards dinner held in the Albert Lea Armory.



2009 Minnesota Roadeo winners include Steve Barnsdorf of the Duluth Transit Authority (3rd Place, Large Bus Division); Duane Dufner of St. Cloud Metro Bus (2nd Place, Large Bus Division); Myron Engle of Watonwan County TMT (Driver’s Choice Award Winner); Ken Rakke of St. Cloud Metro Bus (Champion of Large Bus Division); Virgil Goltz of Brown County Transit (3rd Place Small Bus Division); and Fausto Cambi of First Transit (Champion of Small Bus Division). Todd DeZurick of St. Cloud Metro Bus (2nd Place Small Bus Division) was not present for the photo.



From the President

Tony Kellen, President
Minnesota Public Transit Association
Director of Operations & Technology
St. Cloud Metro Bus
tkellen@stcloudmtc.com
320/529-4481

It's been a busy time for the Minnesota Public Transit Association as we prepare for this year's joint public transit conference with the state of Wisconsin. Working with neighboring states has allowed us to develop a transit conference that is the largest in the Midwest, attracting many companies with products that are needed by transit systems as well as national speakers and elected officials who view this conference as an important event.

This fall is a perfect time to not only get together to share training ideas, learn from colleagues and recharge our batteries, it's a great time to learn more about activity at the federal level that will impact transit systems all across the country. From climate change legislation to economic stimulus to proposals for a new six-year transportation authorization act, Congress is debating the future of transit. It's important to understand what is happening and how proposed changes will impact transit systems in our part of the country. We're clearly seeing a big push to move away from our reliance on fossil fuels and invest in new transportation systems that give people options that are cleaner, more fuel efficient, healthier and more sustainable in the future. It's an exciting time to be involved in transit.



The annual transit conference also provides MPTA an opportunity to meet with our membership and talk about the future of our association. Every year we hold elections for our Board of Directors and officers. This is a great opportunity for any MPTA member to get more involved in shaping the future direction of transit in Minnesota.

The coming year will see more

discussion at the state level of transit funding needs and how transit is organized in Minnesota with the goal of having less of a metro-rural divide. With so much at stake, a strong transit association is needed with active members. MPTA has been able to grow and have more influence with lawmakers thanks to the dedication and willingness of past Board members to get involved and make a difference.

Join us at the MPTA Annual Membership Meeting September 21, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. at the Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center (DECC). In addition to electing Board members and officers and discussing the future of MPTA, we'll be presenting some very hard-working people with awards for all they have done over the years to serve the people of Minnesota. This is your chance to recognize your colleagues so don't miss this inspiring event.



Legislative Update

Margaret Donahoe
Advocacy Director
Minnesota Public Transit Association

With the close of the state legislative session in May, attention has shifted to federal funding of transit with lots of activity impacting systems in Minnesota.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) or economic stimulus package included additional funding, primarily for transit capital needs. An infusion of \$8 billion was provided for transit nationwide with about \$92 million for Minnesota. Minnesota's transit dollars include \$73 million for Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) with \$67 million of that amount going to Metropolitan Area Transit. An additional \$19 million was provided for Greater Minnesota Transit. A significant share of this new funding is being used to purchase new buses.

The annual appropriations process is also moving forward. The federal fiscal year starts on October 1st and Congress is working to get all of the annual appropriations bills passed by the end of September, including the FY2010 Transportation and HUD Appropriations bill. The transportation bill has passed the House and is moving through the committee process in the Senate.

The legislation provides \$10.484 billion for federal transit programs and \$4 billion for High Speed and Intercity Rail in Fiscal Year (FY) 2010. Of the amount provided for public transportation, the legislation provides \$10.333 billion for existing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs. This is a \$101 million increase over last year's bill – roughly 1 percent.

While most FTA programs received modest increases under the House THUD bill, funding for two programs of note were reduced. The Bus and Bus Facilities Program received \$584 million - \$300 million less than last year's level. Of that amount, \$112 million is earmarked for specific projects. The bill states that of the amounts remaining after the earmarks are subtracted, 50 percent of the funds must be used for projects that meet program criteria for the Transit Investment in Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) program, created earlier this year in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). These funds must be used for projects that reduce energy consumption or greenhouse gas emissions through a capital investment. While the committee report does not provide specific information regarding the reduction in bus funds, it appears that these funds were used to increase the urban and rural formula programs.

The Senate bill provides more than \$11 billion for transit programs, \$834.4 million over last year's amount – a 7.5 percent increase. Funding for most transit programs under the bill are roughly the same as last year. Most of the growth is due to a large increase in funding provided for the New Starts Program, which would receive \$2.307 billion, an increase of \$489 million over last year's level. In addition, the legislation also provides \$150 million for WMATA Preventative Maintenance and Capital grants, and \$100 million for the TIGGER grant program.

A big showdown is looming in September as the current six-year surface transportation authorization act, SAFETEA-LU will expire on September 30th. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar is pushing for passage of a new six-year authorization act to not only keep funds flowing, but increase the amount of funding for transportation while transforming the highway and transit programs to be more flexible and more accountable.

Congressman Oberstar's proposal would significantly increase funding for transit and would also provide \$50 billion for high speed rail projects. His bill proposes \$450 billion in the regular program over the next 6 years. Of that, \$337 billion would fund highways and bridges, \$87.6 billion from the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund and \$12.2 billion from the General Fund would fund public transit investment and the rest would fund motor carrier safety programs. The previous six-year bill, SAFETEA-LU provided \$52.6 billion for transit.

The House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit passed Congressman Oberstar's legislation out of committee several weeks ago. However, the Obama Administration has proposed an 18-month extension of SAFETEA-LU along with some policy changes that the White House believes should be passed now to begin to change the program. The Senate, while agreeing with the idea of an 18-month extension, would like to keep the extension "clean" with no policy included in the legislation. A decision will have to be made at some point when Congress returns from the August recess to keep the DOT functioning and keep highway and transit dollars flowing to the states.

You can get the latest news on federal transit funding from representatives of the Federal Transit Administration, the American Public Transportation Association and staff from the offices of Congressmen Oberstar and Obey at the joint Minnesota/Wisconsin Public Transit Conference scheduled for September 21-23, 2009 in Duluth.

Transit Moves America

Minnesota/Wisconsin 2009 Public Transit Conference

Monday through Wednesday – September 21-23
Duluth Entertainment Convention Center (DECC)
Holiday Inn Downtown – Duluth, Minnesota
Register online @ www.mpta-transit.org

Monday, September 21 (DECC)

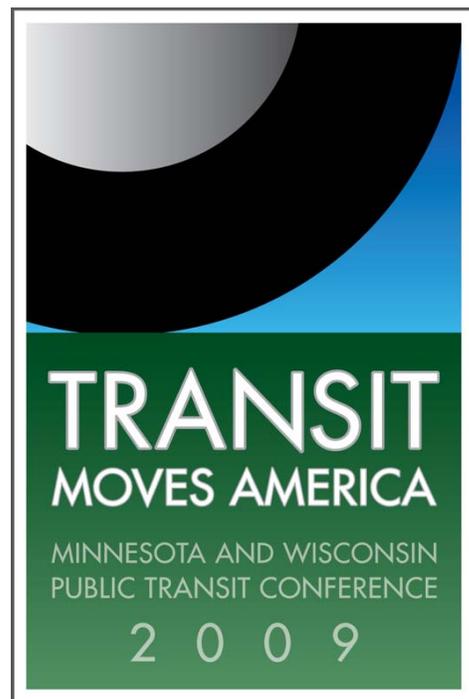
8 a.m. Golf Outing - Nemadji Golf Course, Superior, WI
11 a.m. Registration Open - DECC
1 to 2 p.m. Concurrent Training Sessions - DECC
Training Your Staff- RTAP
Customer Service - Allison & Associates
2:30 - 3:30 p.m. Concurrent Training Sessions - DECC
Technology: Determine What You Need - RTAP
Communicating with Drivers - RTAP
4 p.m. MPTA Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony
WURTA Annual Meeting & Awards Ceremony
7 p.m. Joint Welcome Reception - Harborside Ballroom

Tuesday, September 22 (DECC)

7 a.m. Registration Open - DECC
7 - 8 a.m. Buffet Breakfast - Harborside Ballroom
8:30 - 10 a.m. Welcoming Remarks / Opening Session
Duluth Mayor Don Ness, Superior Mayor Dave Ross
Tony Kellen, MPTA President, Dave Mumma, WURTA Chair
Keynote Speaker Dr. Don Bartlette - Macaroni at Midnight
10:20 - 11:50 a.m. Concurrent Session I:
Midwest High Speed Rail Initiative
Partnering & Collaborating with Training
Managing Paratransit Growth
Meeting Customer Expectations
Advocacy and Community Outreach
Noon - 3:30 p.m. Buffet Lunch & Vendor Expo - Pioneer Hall
3:30 - 5 p.m. State Transit Funding and Policy Updates
(MN/DOT Office of Transit - Met Council - WIS/DOT)
6 p.m. Third Annual First Transit Reception - Harborside Ballroom

Wednesday, September 23 (Holiday Inn Downtown)

7 a.m. Registration Open (Holiday Inn)
7 - 8:30 a.m. Breakfast - Holiday Inn Ballroom
8:30 - 10 a.m. General Session II - Federal Funding and Authorization
(FTA, APTA & Congressional Updates)
10:15 - 11 a.m. Concurrent Sessions II:
Transit Marketing 101
Operations and Safety
Federal Motor Carrier Regulations
Wisconsin Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Services Update
Mobility Management
11:15 a.m. - Noon Concurrent Sessions III:
MN/WI JARC/New Freedom
Future Trends & Demographics
Marketing Your Transit System
Advances in Fuel & Lubricant Technology
County Elderly, Disabled & Rural Transit Coordination
Noon Lunch - Keynote Speaker: Dr. Sandra Rosenbloom
Do I have to give up my car? - Mobility for an aging population





MVTA improves express service between Rosemount and downtown Minneapolis

ROSEMOUNT – In response to requests from riders, the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) is launching a new express bus service – Route 478 – between the Rosemount Community Center and downtown Minneapolis beginning Monday, Sept. 14, 2009. The service starts its route at 145th & Diamond Path, travels will to the Rosemount Community Center and then directly to downtown Minneapolis. In addition, one morning and two evening trips on Route 476 will also serve the Community Center Park & Ride. Route 479 no longer serves the Rosemount Community Center, but continues to serve the 157th St. Transit Station in Apple Valley.

“For many years, the Rosemount Council has had two goals regarding bus service,” said Mayor William Droste, who also serves on the MVTA Board of Directors. “The goals are to improve the quality of service and to build a park & ride facility for our residents. The new express routes begin to meet our first element of improved service.”

Route 478 will offer two northbound trips to depart the Rosemount Community Center Park & Ride at 13885 S. Robert Trail at 6:35 and 7:04 a.m., arriving in downtown Minneapolis at 3rd & 7th at 7:20 and 7:49 a.m. Two Route 478 southbound trips will depart Gateway Ramp at 4:30 and 5:00 p.m., arriving at the Rosemount Community Center Park & Ride at 5:26 p.m. and 5:56 p.m.

Route 476 will begin at 145th & Diamond Path at 5:36 a.m., serve the Rosemount Community Center at 5:43 a.m. and also serve the Palomino Hills Park & Ride before reaching downtown Minneapolis at 6:40 a.m. In the evening, there are two Route 476V trips that depart Gateway Ramp at 4:06 and 5:36 p.m., arriving at the Rosemount Community Center at 5:12 and 6:44 p.m.

“Earlier this year, the MVTA drafted three options for improving service to Rosemount residents,” said MVTA Executive Director Beverley Miller. “The plan that we are implementing was the preferred choice of most respondents and we are pleased to be able to offer these service improvements while staying within our budget,” she said.

In addition to the express service on Routes 476V and 478, the City of Rosemount also has all day flex route/local service on Route 420, which travels within the city and also to the Apple Valley Transit Station to make connections to other routes. Riders board the bus at timepoints and designated stops, and are also able to call for reservations for off-route pick-ups within the designated service area (as shown on the pocket schedule). Parking at the Community Center is located south of the ice arena and banquet area. Some 50-75 spaces are reserved for park & riders.



MVTA congratulates Suburban Transit Association Legislators of the Year

BURNSVILLE – The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) Board of Directors congratulates the 2009 Suburban Transit Association (STA) Legislators of the Year. The legislators were honored at an event on August 5 at the Mediterranean Cruise Café in Burnsville.



2009 recipients were (from left): Rep. Joe Hoppe, Chaska; Rep. Jennifer Loon, Eden Prairie; Burnsville Mayor/STA Chair/MVTA Chair Elizabeth Kautz; Sen. Jim Carlson, Eagan; and Sen. John Doll, Burnsville. Rep. Tara Mack, Apple Valley, was unable to attend and received her award at a later time.

“These legislators have worked hand-in-hand with the Suburban Transit Providers,” said Kautz. “We have strong relationships with them and want to acknowledge the service they provide on behalf of transit.”

The STA was founded in 1995 to bring together suburban communities whose purpose was to provide flexible transit services. The STA is an innovative, public-private transit partnership that embraces and implements new technologies to respond to changing passenger needs. From 2003 to 2007, ridership on STA member buses increased by 40 percent. In addition, the STA has had passenger satisfaction rates as high as 98 percent and many of their members have been honored with the Minnesota Transit System of the Year award.

STA recognized Sen. Doll because he was the chief author and instrumental in passing legislation that requires the conveyance of the Apple Valley Transit Station to the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) from the Metropolitan Council. Sen. Doll amended this language into both the Omnibus Transportation Finance bill and the Capital Investment Bonding Bill, eventually being included in the Omnibus Transportation Finance bill that was signed into law by Governor Pawlenty on May 5th.

Sen. Carlson was a co-author of the legislation that requires the conveyance of the Apple Valley Transit Station to the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority from the Metropolitan Council. In addition, Sen. Carlson was a member of Transportation Finance Conference Committee and ensured that this language was included in the final conference committee report that was passed by the legislature.

Rep. Hoppe, Rep. Loon and Rep. Mack were recognized for authoring an amendment on the House floor to reprioritize transit funding which would have provided more funding for SouthWest Transit and the other suburban providers.

metro council.org

Transit system has strong safety record



Despite recent highly publicized incidents, the region's transit system has an outstanding safety record and our Metro Transit employees are working hard every day to keep it that way. For example, over the last five years we have recognized 106 operators who have driven our buses for 25 years without causing a single accident.

Read Story (<http://www.metrocouncil.org/about/chair.htm>).

Fare hearings set for dial-a-ride service

Efforts to restructure community-based dial-a-ride services throughout the metro area moved forward in July when the Metropolitan Council approved several standard operating guidelines and authorized public hearings for proposed service fares. Hearings will be held in September.

Read Story (<http://www.metrocouncil.org/directions/transit/transit2009/DialRideJul09.htm>)



Central Corridor light rail moves closer to construction

The Central Corridor light-rail transit project marked another milestone with publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement in the Federal Register in late June. Residents and workers in downtown St. Paul are also seeing the first physical evidence of the coming construction, as preliminary work on relocating utilities is under way. Read Story (<http://www.metrocouncil.org/directions/transit/transit2009/FEISJul09.htm>)



Grant supports bike planning tool

Development of a regional bikeway system plan got a boost from a recent \$185,000 grant from Transit for Livable Communities. The grant will fund development of an online tool to help city and county planners to establish and enhance bikeways data, get easy access to regional and public user data, and respond to issues identified by bikeway users in their community.

Read Story (<http://www.metrocouncil.org/directions/transit/transit2009/CycloplanJul09.htm>)



Central Corridor Making Tracks News



Read News @ www.centralcorridor.org

in transit

Minnesota Public Transit Newsletter

InTransit newsletter is a bi-monthly newsletter published by the Minnesota Public Transit Association (MPTA). Opinions and views expressed in this publication may not necessarily be those of the Minnesota Public Transit Association or its members.

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Contributors

Margaret Donahoe — Transportation Alliance
Laura Baenen — Metropolitan Council
Tom Elwell — Duluth Transit Authority
Kris Hanson — KAT
Tony Kellen — St. Cloud Metro Bus
Robin Selvig — MVTA
Metropolitan Council Newsletter

SEND NEWS
telwell@duluthtransit.com

KAT celebrates 10 years of transit service

WILLMAR – Kandiyohi Area Transit (KAT) celebrated providing 10 years of transit service to Willmar and Kandiyohi County on July 23, 2009. KAT staff and board members served rootbeer floats to the public at its transit shelter/transfer site located in downtown Willmar. The event was very well received by the public and served as a reminder to the community that the system is still going strong!



In Transit Bulletin Board

Events

September 21-23 Minnesota/Wisconsin Public Transit Conference Duluth

RTAP Training Classes

Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) offers training in passenger assistance, defensive driving, abuse prevention along with refresher courses and training for newly hired employees. New hires should take the full eight hours of Passenger Assistance, four hours of Defensive Driving and four hours of Abuse Prevention. Refresher training should be taken once every three years after the initial new hire courses have been completed. View RTAP calendar and register for classes online at www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/rtap/rtaptrng.html. For more information, contact RTAP Coordinator Lynn Frank at 651/366-4710 or lynn.frank@dot.state.mn.us.

