

intransit

2010 Minnesota State Roadeo

For 23 years, bus drivers from around the state have competed and trained together at the Minnesota Bus Roadeo.

The annual Minnesota Statewide Bus Roadeo provides training, skill enhancement and recognition for Minnesota's public bus operators. This year, nearly 40 drivers from 26 transit systems navigated an obstacle course set up to simulate real-life driving challenges in Alexandria.

Large Bus Division Winners

- 1st: Metro Transit - Marshall Freeman
- 2nd: St Cloud Metro Bus - Bob Braegelmann
- 3rd: St Cloud Metro Bus - Aaron Marshall

Small Bus Division Winners

- 1st: First Transit - Metro Mobility - Fausto Cambi
- 2nd: Tri-Valley Heartland Express - Alan Altepeter
- 3rd: Red Lake Transit - Jeffrey Iceman

People's Choice Award:

- Deonna Banks, Smartlink Transit



Pictured from left: Aaron Marshall (St. Cloud Metro Bus), Bob Braegelmann (St. Cloud Metro Bus), Marshall Freeman (Metro Transit), Deonna Banks (Smartlink Transit), Fausto Cambi (Metro Mobility), Alan Altepeter (Tri-Valley Heartland Express), and Jeffrey Iceman (Red Lake Transit).

This year's Minnesota Statewide Bus Roadeo was organized by the Minnesota Public Transit Association (MPTA). The Roadeo is supported by the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Rural Transit Assistance Program, and hosted by local transit agencies from across the state. Local transit systems bid annually to host this statewide event. Next year's Roadeo will be held in St. Cloud.



Join Us!

Don't miss this opportunity to make your transit service better through new ideas and inspiring presentations that will prepare you for the challenges ahead.

Minnesota Public Transit Conference

Sept. 13-15, 2010

Mayo Civic Center, Rochester, MN

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CONFERENCE](#)

Early bird special now through Sept. 4

From the President



Tony Kellen, President
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President's Column

Federal funding for transit is critical and with a major election year as a backdrop, now is a great time to contact your US Senators and your member of Congress regarding federal transit funding.

We continue to wait for a multi-year surface transportation authorization act to replace SAFETEA-LU and wonder how long Congress can continue to shift funds into the Highway and Transit Accounts in the Highway Trust Fund. Clearly, the current system is not sustainable — we need new transportation policies and new transportation funding to support transit systems all around the country. It's time to demand action by Congress to put in place more stable, sustainable federal transportation funding.

Send an e-mail or make a phone call and let your federal representatives know how important federal funding is for the people in your community who rely on public transit. The ask is simple: make the passage of a strong, multi-year transportation authorization act a priority in 2010!

You can learn all of the latest information on federal legislation and issues at the Annual Minnesota Public Transit Conference. We will have representatives from the Federal Transit Administration in town to provide an update on important issues.

In the absence of a new authorization bill, funding continues to be provided to discretionary grant programs that award funding on a competitive basis. You can learn more about grant opportunities and strategies for successfully competing for new funds at the Public Transit conference as well.

**Send an e-mail or make a phone call
and let your federal representatives know
how important federal funding is for the people
in your community who rely on public transit.**

As always, it's important for you and the people who ride transit in your community to tell your story about the many benefits of transit service. MPTA has been working to compile stories here in Minnesota about why people ride the bus and why the service is so critical. The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is working to gather similar stories from people around the country.

You can help support this effort and help stress the importance of transit funding with members of Congress.

Just go to APTA's new Telling Our Story web site <http://www.publictransportation.org/petition/> and in seconds you'll be able to complete the petition letting our legislators know why transit is important to you. Next, encourage your employees, riders, and advocates also to sign the petition, which asks Congress to act now to support public transportation. APTA will deliver the petition to Congress in September.

Again, you can hear directly from APTA and learn more about this advocacy project at the Minnesota Public Transit Conference, September 13-15 in Rochester. Just go to: www.mpta-transit.org to learn more.

Legislative Update

Margaret Donahoe
Advocacy Director
Minnesota Public Transit Association

Legislative Report

Unfortunately, Congress has not made any further progress in passing a new six-year surface transportation authorization act. The current extension of SAFETEA-LU expires at the end of this year.

Congress has been working to develop a Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill for FY2011. The new federal fiscal year begins on Oct. 1, 2010.

House

The House bill provides \$11.31 billion for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs, an increase of \$574.89 million over FY 2010 funding levels. Within this amount, \$8.96 billion is provided for Formula and Bus programs, an increase of \$576.67 million over last year's amount. Despite the significant growth in the trust fund programs, the committee acknowledged that it currently lacks sufficient budget authority to provide the increased amounts. Future authorizing legislation will need to be enacted to expand the contract authority for FTA programs (which currently only allows roughly the same level as provided in the FY 2010 bill) to allow for the higher amounts to be allocated. Spending is also contingent on program authorizing language for the full year, since current authorizing law only extends programs through the first three months of FY 2011, ending Dec. 31, 2010.

The bill also includes \$2 billion for the Capital Investments Program (New Starts), and \$150 million for capital grants for the Washington Area Metropolitan Transportation Authority — the same levels provided last year.

The committee did not provide funds for the Transportation Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) program. Instead, the committee recommends that the FTA use unallocated Bus and Bus Facilities program funds (those not earmarked) to provide grants that meet the criteria set forth in the TIGGER program.

Separate from FTA funding, the committee provides \$400 million for the Department of Transportation's National Infrastructure Investments Program (TIGER grants), \$200 million less than the amount provided in FY 2010. Of these grants, \$100 million must be used for projects

in rural areas. Under the first round of TIGER grants, approximately one-third of funds were allocated to transit related projects, so if this trend continues, a significant amount of additional funds could be available to successful applicants, above the amounts provided for FTA programs.

The House THUD Appropriations bill provides \$24 million within the

FTA Administration account for the implementation of a transit safety oversight program. These funds will only become available if Congress passes a safety oversight bill by Sept. 30, 2011.

Representative Steve LaTourette (R-OH) offered an amendment to the bill that would alter the definition of capital expenditures under the Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program to include the cost of fuel and electricity used to operate transit vehicles. The purpose of this amendment is to provide operating relief to struggling transit systems by allowing them to count fuel costs as capital expense, rather than an operating expense. THUD Subcommittee Chairman John Olver (D-MA) objected to the measure, noting that it would have a negative impact on the budget. Chairman Olver then offered to amend LaTourette's amendment to make \$250 million of Bus and

Formula Grants available for general operating costs. The amendment does not identify the specific accounts that the

funds would come from, or how they would be distributed. In addition, the Olver amendment only allows this exception to take effect if legislation authorizing the change is enacted prior to Sept. 30, 2011.

Senate

The Senate version of the bill provides \$10.8 billion for transit programs, including \$8.36 billion for

The THUD Appropriations bill has passed the full House. The Senate has passed the bill out of the Appropriations Committee, but it still needs to be passed off the Senate floor.

continued...

Legislative update continued...

Bus and Formula programs. The amount is \$600 million less than the House bill and roughly the same as the President's recommendation. This amount falls within the limitations for budget authority and contract authority available for trust fund expenditures.

In addition, the Senate bill includes \$2 billion for the Capital Investments Program (New Starts), and \$150 million for capital grants for the Washington Area Metropolitan Transportation Authority — the same levels provided last year, and in the House bill. The Senate bill also provides an additional \$100 million for Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) grants.

The Senate bill includes \$1 billion for High Speed Rail — \$400 million less than the House bill, but the same amount that the President requested in his annual budget. For PTC, the bill provides \$150 million, which doubles the House amount, and is \$100 million more than last year's level and the amount authorized by Congress. The Senate provides \$1.98 billion for Amtrak capital and operating grants, \$194 million less than the House level.

The Senate THUD bill provides \$800 million for the TIGER program, which also doubles the amount provided by the House, and is a \$200 million increase over last year's amount.

floor. If time runs out before the bills can be considered on the floor and by a House-Senate conference to work out the differences in the legislation, it is likely that the THUD bill will be wrapped up into a larger omnibus appropriations package that includes multiple spending bills, either prior to adjournment in the fall or during a lame-duck session after the elections.

On Tuesday, August 3, the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs reported favorably S.1619, The Livable Communities Act, by a 12-10 vote. The bill statutorily authorizes the Office of Sustainable Communities within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and authorizes the existing Interagency Partnership between HUD, the Department of Transportation (DOT), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The bill also authorizes two competitive grant programs which would be contingent on future appropriations. A total of \$475 million over four years is authorized for the Comprehensive Planning Grant program, which would assist communities in developing comprehensive regional plans that must consider transportation needs, affordable and accessible housing, economic development, and environmental concerns.

The second competitive grant program, the Challenge Grant Program, authorizes \$2.2 billion over three years

to implement projects identified as priorities in comprehensive regional plans. These grants would provide funds for projects such as public transportation improvements, support for transit-oriented

development, pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, the preservation and creation of affordable housing, and to promote economic development. Amendments adopted at the markup would permit the creation of a credit facility to provide loans and loan guarantees that support the initial infrastructure for transit-oriented development. Eligible projects include transit facilities, structured parking, environmental remediation activities, sidewalks and bikeways.

THUD bill funding for Minnesota

The Senate

Central Corridor - \$42,345,000

Requested by Senators Franken, Klobuchar, The President

Cedar Avenue Bus Rapid Transitway - \$500,000

Requested by Senator Klobuchar

Northstar Phase II Project - \$1,500,000

Requested by Senators Franken, Klobuchar

The House

Central Corridor - \$45,000,000

Requested by: Cong. Ellison, Cong. McCollum, The President

Interstate 94 Transit Corridor - \$750,000

Requested by Congresswoman McCollum

Northern Lights Express - \$500,000

Requested by Congressman Oberstar

Within the amounts provided for FTA programs, the Senate bill provides \$5 million for the implementation of a transit safety oversight program. Unlike the House bill, this appropriation is provided outside the FTA Administrative account. Like the House bill, however, the funds will only be made available in the event that the Congress enacts a safety oversight bill.

The THUD Appropriations bill has passed the full House. The Senate has passed the bill out of the Appropriations Committee, but it still needs to be passed off the Senate



New Jefferson Lines Express Service operates from Burnsville Transit Station

By ROBIN SELVIG, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority

Burnsville, Minn. – Jefferson Lines and its agent, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA), has launched new express bus service from the Burnsville Transit Station (BTS) at Highway 13 & Nicollet Avenue in Burnsville to Mason City and Des Moines, IA and Kansas City, MO. The new service features luxury motorcoaches equipped with free Wi-Fi, Satellite Radio, movies and extra legroom. Three northbound and three southbound Jefferson buses operate through BTS daily.

“We have enjoyed a successful partnership with Jefferson Lines for nearly 10 years,” said MVTA Executive Director Beverley Miller. “This partnership allows the MVA to provide more services to our area residents and also helps introduce our regular route transit service to those using the Jefferson Lines buses. Daily, we have riders boarding Jefferson Lines buses in Burnsville to travel to destinations throughout the Midwest and across the country.”

“We are very excited about our ongoing relationship with the MVTA and with the new Jefferson Express service,” said Charlie Zelle, Jefferson Lines President and CEO. “Given the high cost of fuel, traffic issues and concerns for the environment, we feel this is the future of ground transportation.” He continued, “Jefferson Lines is second only to bicyclists as the most fuel efficient transportation

choice - one coach can replace 55 cars and our new coaches have engines that are 90 percent cleaner than the industries predecessors.”

The new service features luxury motorcoaches equipped with free Wi-Fi, Satellite Radio, movies and extra legroom.

The new Jefferson Lines service is supported by a network of connecting routes that allows travel to more than 70 Minnesota communities and more than 3,500 destinations in the United States, Canada and Mexico. New buses also operate to Fargo, ND and Duluth, MN. Connections are available to these

locations from Burnsville. As part of the launch of the new service, special “buy one, get one free” fares are currently available on select northbound and southbound routes. For schedules, fares and ticketing information, call the MVTA at 952-882-7500.

The MVTA has been providing transportation for the businesses and residents of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Rosemount and Savage for some 20 years.

Founded in 1919 in Minneapolis, Jefferson Lines provides travel options throughout the Midwest and currently provides intercity bus service to more than 170 communities in 13 states and the province of Manitoba, Canada. Connections to thousands of destinations in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico are available through this network.

2010 Minnesota State Bus Rodeo July 23-24, 2010, Alexandria



Total time lapse between first and last burning bus photos above is four minutes.



Met Council offers rail service 'refund'

By FREDERICK MELO, Pioneer Press, Posted: 08/21/2010 12:01:00 AM CDT

The Hiawatha light-rail and Northstar commuter-rail lines last year cost less to operate and generated more fare-box revenue than expected, allowing the Metropolitan Council to return \$1.2 million to the five counties that pay for half the lines' operating costs.

"It's a refund," Met Council Chairman Peter Bell said.

In 2008, the five metro counties agreed to form the Counties Transit Improvement Board and levy a quarter-cent sales tax to fund rail, bus and other transit options. The group, composed of Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties, estimates the tax will generate \$85 million to \$90 million per year.

Bell said the rail lines were more popular and less expensive in 2009 than anticipated, but he cautioned that not every year will bring such a handsome return.

"Some years it's going to be the opposite," he said.

The Hiawatha line opened in 2004, connecting downtown Minneapolis to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport and the Mall of America. It operates this year on a budget of \$25.7 million.

Northstar, the state's first commuter-rail line, began operations in late 2009 between Big Lake and Minneapolis. Its operating budget for 2010, the first full year of operation, is \$16.8 million.

Metro Transit union rejects contract offer

By BILL CATLIN, Minnesota Public Radio, August 23, 2010

St. Paul, Minn. — Twin Cities Metro Transit bus drivers have overwhelmingly rejected a contract offer from the transit agency, according to union officials.

The Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents 2,300 drivers, said 98 percent of those who returned ballots voted to reject the contract.

Three days of mediation are scheduled to start next Monday. No work stoppage is planned at this point, according to Michelle

Sommers, the union's executive director.

Sommers says the Metro Transit offer calls for a wage freeze for two years, and higher employee costs for health insurance.

"They want the copay to more than double from what it currently is, and premium increases, so a combination of both," she said.

Sommers says union member wages range from \$16 to \$24 per hour.

Tom Weaver, regional administrator of the Metropolitan Council, issued a statement saying Metro Transit is operating within severe budgetary constraints. He said the agency is prepared to return to mediation and see if it can address some of the ATU's concerns.

The last transit union strike in the Twin Cities was in 2004. It caused a sharp ridership drop that didn't return to prestrike levels for several years.

Metro Bus's new Travel Training program empowers refugees and immigrants to easily, independently, and affordably travel to work, medical and other appointments, school, and shopping.

It respectfully provides them with the option to live independently while they are learning the English language, local customs, and life skills needed to assimilate into the community.



Travel Trainers Safiya and Sayneb

St. Cloud Metro Bus reaches out to refugees and recent immigrants

By ARLENE WIRTH & BERTA HARTIG, St. Cloud Metro Bus

When Mohamed moved with his wife and six children to St. Cloud, Minn., he did not speak English, he did not drive, and he did not live near other Somali people. He didn't even know where the nearest grocery store was located. Unable to communicate with his neighbors, nor read and understand the public transportation system, he felt isolated. Life in this new unfamiliar environment was difficult and lonely.

The St. Cloud area is a resettlement community for recent immigrants and refugees moving to Minnesota — the largest population is from Somalia. The majority of immigrants and refugees do not speak English and are dependent on family, friends, and human service agencies for transportation. They are reluctant to ride the bus because it is difficult to communicate with the driver. Often they feel lost, scared and struggle to get to their destination.

With a little help from Somali-speaking Metro Bus Travel Trainers, Safiya and Sayneb, Mohamed learned how to ride the bus. His family is no longer living in isolation. They are able to shop for groceries, attend school to learn English, go to medical

appointments, visit with other recent immigrants and refugees, and help others adjust to their new community.

New program

Metro Bus had a Travel Training program in place to transition some of the Dial-a-Ride passengers to the fixed route. Funded by a New Freedom grant, this program helped contain Dial-a-Ride growth and reduce ADA-trip denials. The program also helped seniors and the general public learn how to use the fixed route system.

Metro Bus noticed a great need to reach out to immigrants and refugees and teach them how to ride the bus. Because they didn't speak English, training was a challenge. Their need for specialized training was greater than the current program could accommodate.

“Initially, we tried to help passengers and drivers communicate using a picture book of common destinations where refugees and immigrants most frequently travel,” said Debbie Anderson, Metro Bus Community Outreach/Travel Trainer Specialist. “This helped but did not fix the problem.”

Providing Travel Training in a passenger's native language would expedite the training process, saving valuable time and resources, and would make the experience trouble-free for the passenger.

When Metro Bus learned of a program through the Minnesota Workforce Center which helped immigrants and refugees learn job skills, they jumped at the chance to participate. The program matched Metro Bus with two Somali women, who spoke functional English. The Workforce Center paid their wages while Metro Bus trained them to be Travel Trainers. Just as their training was complete the funding from the Minnesota Workforce Center ended. Metro Bus did not have the financial resources to fund the new Travel Training program.

Trainers Safiya and Sayneb continued their work as Metro Bus volunteers while Metro Bus researched potential funding opportunities.

To date, Metro Bus has received funding from the Otto Bremer Foundation in Minneapolis and a corporate donation from the Bremer Bank in St. Cloud and continues to apply for additional funding to fully implement this program. *continued...*



MVTA Receives Two Gillig BRT-Styles Buses for Cedar Corridor/U of M Service

By ROBIN SELVIG, Minnesota Valley Transit Authority

Burnsville, Minn. – The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) has taken delivery of two 2010 Gillig transit vehicles featuring the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) styling package. These vehicles will be used on the new Route 475 service that begins Sept. 7 between the Cedar Grove Transit Station in Eagan and the University of Minnesota, as well as on other routes in the corridor.

The buses feature a sleeker, newer-style design, and take advantage of a silver background and the colors in the MVTA logo to clearly identify the vehicle as part of the MVTA fleet. The inside of the bus will also tie to the MVTA colors. The MVTA was awarded a Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) grant in 2009-2010 to fund these and eight additional vehicles to be delivered in 2011. The vehicles cost just more than \$400,000 each. The cost of operating the service will be shared by the Metropolitan Council and the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB). CTIB — comprised of

Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey and Washington counties — is a leader in developing the Metro Area’s comprehensive regional transit system in collaboration with the Metropolitan Council and neighboring Scott and Carver counties. Through the use of a quarter-cent metro sales tax and a \$20 motor vehicle sales excise fee—CTIB provides funding to advance transit projects in the Metro Area that will help commuters, residents and businesses move more quickly and efficiently.

“We are building our identity in the Cedar Avenue Corridor,” said MVTA Vice Chair Gary Hansen, an Eagan City Councilmember. “The new service to the University of Minnesota has been frequently requested, and we are excited to have new vehicles to operate and promote this service,” he said. MVTA Board members had an opportunity to step on board one of the new buses prior to their meeting on Aug. 25.

Metro Bus reaches out, continued...

Types of Training

- 1** A voicemail messaging system is established for Somali-speaking individuals to leave messages for the Travel Trainers. The Trainers contact the callers to either answer their questions or to schedule training.
- 2** Destination Training: Individuals learn how to travel to and from a specific destination using bus schedules and the system map as training tools in a classroom setting. This training is provided at any of the Adult Education programs, English as a Second Language schools, or sites where refugees and immigrants access services.
- 3** Onboard Travel Training: Individuals learn how to use the bus for general travel; selecting destinations of his/her choice. Travel Trainers accompany trainees on the bus as they practice riding to and from selected locations.
- 4** Transit Center Service: When time permits, Travel Trainers spend time at the Transit Center to answer passenger questions.

SouthWest Transit recognized at local and national levels

By LINDA SPEVACEK SouthWest Transit

SouthWest Transit (SWT), the transit provider for Eden Prairie, Chanhassen and Chaska has been recognized for its work in two very distinct areas: Security and dedication to area residents.

On Sunday, May 2, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) presented SouthWest Transit with its National Certificate of Merit for Security, recognizing SouthWest Transit for its commitment to passenger and employee safety and for its Emergency Preparedness Plan. This comprehensive plan provides written procedures for situations such as weather emergencies; vehicle breakdowns and accidents; facility emergencies; regional emergencies, including a pandemic outbreak plan.

The second area SouthWest Transit is being honored for is its dedication to area residents, specifically for the “Feeder Bus” service operated in Eden Prairie that provides senior citizens and other individuals transportation for grocery shopping, medical appointments and access to other much needed services. The Eden Prairie Human Rights and Diversity Commission selected SouthWest Transit as a recipient of the Human Rights Award. The Commissioners stated that SouthWest Transit is being recognized for its dedication to the residents which exemplifies the intentions of the Eden Prairie Manifesto.

As part of its community outreach, SouthWest Transit employs special-needs students from Intermediate District 287 who receive work experience and provide SouthWest Transit capable, reliable help. The Outstanding Employer Award was presented to SouthWest Transit by the District in recognition of “Exceptional Vocational Opportunities offer to our Intermediate District 287 South Education Center Students”.

“All of us at SouthWest Transit strive to make this the very best transit system for our riders and for the communities at large that we serve,” said SouthWest Transit’s Chief Executive Officer Len Simich. “It’s rewarding to be recognized three times in the same month for two very different parts of our service. It is a testament to the foresight and dedication of the SouthWest Transit employees and our Commission in leading this organization.”

Safety has its benefits at SWT

SouthWest Transit (SWT) is very proud of its safety and security record, which has been recognized by APTA awards in 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. An essential key to this success is provided by our drivers, contracted through First Transit.

To encourage drivers to live up to the SWT credo “Expect the Best,” SouthWest Transit developed a driver incentive program that financially rewards operators for their part in reaching safety and customer service goals. An average payout of 78 percent is earned annually. Those drivers who achieve top performance for 12 months are issued leather jackets with the SW logo stamped on them, and gold driver nameplates instead of the standard black background plates so the customers can be involved in their recognition. In 2009, 18 drivers were honored as “GOLD” employees.

In 2010, eight drivers joined the ranks of “GOLD” employees with an additional six drivers achieving this status for the second consecutive year. These six drivers were presented with a pin with two stones representing their two years as a “Gold Award Recipient.” All of the newest “GOLD” employees were recognized by the SWT Commission at its May meeting.



DTA provides more buses for Grandma's Marathon this year

By TOM ELWELL, Duluth Transit Authority

DULUTH - More Duluth Transit Authority (DTA) buses were used to transport Grandma's Marathon runners this year than ever before. Thirty-six drivers and two mechanics operated buses for Grandma's Marathon this year. In all, 215 total buses and the North Shore Scenic Railroad train were used to transport runners. DTA buses transported marathon runners from Duluth to starting lines at the Lakeview Castle north of the Talmadge River for half marathon runners and Two Harbors for full marathon runners. The transporting of runners begins before sunrise at 4:45 a.m.

The DTA has been involved in transporting Marathon runners since 1976.



SouthWest Transit adopts 'Shared Expectations and Responsibilities'

By LINDA SPEVACEK SouthWest Transit

The SouthWest Transit Rider Advisory Committee is an integral part of the award-winning transit agency whose credo states: Expect the best.

In 2009, the Committee suggested a "Quiet Zone" along express routes where cell phone calls are to be kept to a minimum. This year their focus was "Shared Expectations and Responsibilities." Working with SouthWest Transit staff, the Committee developed an outline of what "Expect the Best" means to SouthWest Transit Riders, Staff, and Commission members. The SouthWest Transit Commission adopted the "Shared Expectations and Responsibilities" document at its June 17 meeting. To read the document: http://www.swtransit.org/Our_Shared_Expectations_and_Responsibilities.html





Go-To Cards are easy to use and speed up the boarding process, making transit more convenient for everyone.

Metro Transit enhances Go-To Card system

Metro Transit has added several features to its Go-To Card fare payment system, making travel with these passes even easier and more convenient.

Use of the Go-To Card family of transit passes has become more widespread on Metro Transit buses and trains — more than 40 percent of all rides are taken with these passes.

“The convenience of using the phone and the additional feature on our website is appealing to many and extends more options to our customers,” said Brian Lamb, Metro Transit General Manager.

The Go-To Card is a durable plastic card used to pay fares. Instead of inserting cash or a magnetic fare card into a fare box, customers can touch their cards to a reader and their fares are recorded instantly. The cards can be used on Metro Transit buses and trains and on suburban transit systems.

Customers now can check their Go-To Card balance and add value

to their cards by calling Metro Transit’s information line, (612) 373-3333, and use the automated phone system. Customers can enter their information by speaking or using their phone’s keypad.

The phone system also allows a Go-To Card holder to deactivate a card or report it lost or stolen.

Another option allows customers to check their card’s balance on Metro Transit’s website. Users will find a link on the blue toolbox on most pages on the site. Once a serial number is entered, cardholders can see their card’s value, purchases made or rides taken in the past 30 days.

Use of Go-To technology is growing
In addition to the regular Go-To Card, transit passes that use Go-To technology include Metropass, the employer-provided pass; U-Pass, available to University of Minnesota students; and Go-To College Pass, for students at participating colleges and trade schools. Go-To Card technology was first used in October 2005 by customers who carry

Metropass.

As of May 2010, there were nearly 249,000 Go-To Cards and passes in the system; more than 176,000 of those were regular Go-To Cards.

Use of the Go-To Card family of transit passes has become more widespread on Metro Transit buses and trains – more than 40% of all rides are taken with these passes.

Since the Go-To Card system first launched, Metro Transit has continued to add features in response to Go-To Card customers’ needs, said Metro Transit General Manager Brian Lamb.

“The convenience of using the phone and the additional feature on our website are appealing to many and extends more options to our customers,” he said.

Later this year, Metro Transit plans to offer an auto-refill feature in which customers can have their cards replenished automatically when their stored value gets low or when their 31-Day Pass is running out.

metro council.org

[Council awards first heavy construction contract for Central Corridor LRT](#)

The Metropolitan Council in late June awarded the first heavy construction contract for the Central Corridor light rail transit (LRT) project. The award to build the seven-mile St. Paul segment of the line went to Walsh Construction.

Bids for the heavy construction work on the line's western three miles will be opened July 27. The Council is scheduled to award that contract Aug. 25.



[Council approves 2030 comp plan for MSP International Airport](#)

The Metropolitan Council approved the long-term plan with several conditions, including that the MAC should begin a new noise mitigation study five years before it anticipates reaching 580,000 annual operations (takeoffs and landings). Operations in 2009 totaled 432,395.

If the economy shows steady improvement, the plan anticipates adding:

- A new airport hotel by 2025.
- 6 new gates, 10,000 more parking spaces and an expanded and modernized Terminal 1 (Lindbergh) by 2030.
- 16 new gates and 5,900 more parking spaces at Terminal 2 (Humphrey) by 2030.



[Commuter Challenge draws nearly 15,000 participants](#)

The number of commuters pledging to try an alternative to driving alone during this year's Commuter Challenge – nearly 15,000 – increased 54% over last year's effort.

[Regional transportation plan draft update ready for public comment](#)

A new approach to highway funding in the metro area and the first significant aviation update since 1996 mark the major changes in the 2010 draft update to the region's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan (TPP), recently released for public comment.

The 2010 draft update to the current plan, adopted in January 2009, also includes other less significant adjustments, including text that updates financial forecasts and accounts for projects funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.



Central Corridor Making Tracks News

Central Corridor LRT Update

**Making
Tracks**



[Read News](#)

InTransit Bulletin Board

Sept 11	Defensive Driving Only Connections of Moorhead	Moorhead
Sept 13 -15	Minnesota Public Transit Conference Mayo Civic Center and Radisson/Doubletree	Rochester

Register drivers through the Mn/DOT Office of Transit website at:
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/rtap/index.html>

You can apply to be a Host Agency for classes through the website at:
<http://www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/rtap/rtapclassrequest.html>

Trainers available

We have 13 qualified trainers throughout Greater Minnesota who are eager to come to your facility to train your drivers!

Grantee organizations (Section 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317) having the appropriate facilities and equipment are encouraged to host classes in Passenger Assistance, Defensive Driving and Maltreatment Awareness. Go to the [Request A Class At Your Location](#) to view the brochure describing the program.

The deadline to apply for First Quarter 2011 classes is December 6th, 2010.

**Recognize your staff.
Toot your horn.
Share lessons learned.
Submit an article for *InTransit*.
It doesn't have to be long.
It can be as simple as a photo
with a cutline. We want to hear
from you. The deadline for the
November issue is October 15 —
you have plenty of time to think
of something to send!**

Submit items to:
bertahartigcommunications@gmail.com



InTransit newsletter is a bimonthly 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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Metropolitan Council Newsletter

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Alan Herrmann, SmartLink Transit

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Dave Jacobson, Southwest Transit

Tim Kirchoff, Anoka County

Mike Klauda, North Central Bus

Tony Knauer, Rochester

Mike Opatz, Maple Grove

Helen Pieper, Timber Trails Transit

