

intransit

November 2016 Edition

Thanks for attending the 2016 Conference and Expo in Rochester!



- ◆ *Bonnie Buchanan, Jefferson Lines - Distinguished Career Award recipient*
- ◆ *Bill Wilkin, Metro Transit - Distinguished Career Award recipient*
- ◆ *Towanda Loving, First Transit/Metro Mobility - MN Bus Operator of the Year Award recipient*
 - ◆ *Melinda Estey from SMART Transit - Transit System of the Year Award recipient*
 - ◆ *Tony Knauer, Rochester Public Transit - Transit Professional of the Year Award recipient*
 - ◆ *Sarah Brodt Lenz, MnDOT Office of Transit - Distinguished Career Award recipient*
- ◆ *Andy Stone, Brainerd/Crow Wing Public Transit - Management Innovation Award recipient*
 - ◆ *Craig Rempp, MPTA President*

[Visit MPTA's Facebook page for more photos from the conference and expo!](#)

President's Column

Craig Rempp



We're dealing with a whole new political landscape as we prepare for the 2017 Legislative Session which starts on January 3rd.

As always, the Minnesota Public Transit Association will be working with legislative leaders and committee members to support high quality transit service throughout the state. With so many newly elected legislators, we have a big job ahead in helping lawmakers understand how and where transit systems operate and how they are funded. **We will need everyone to get involved and reach out to their legislators!** MPTA will work to make it easy for you.

As you should have noticed, MPTA is focusing more this year on analyzing transit service in the state and developing new policy and funding suggestions. We greatly appreciate getting information from you on your system through surveys and email correspondence as we work with MnDOT's Office of Transit and the Metropolitan Council to help guide long-term planning. We want to ensure that each system can thrive with a vision for the future that works for your communities and residents.

The MPTA Board will be approving a new legislative agenda for 2017. If you have ideas or suggestions, please let me know.

Thank You! to everyone who attended the Minnesota Public Transit Conference in Rochester this year. It was a great event that featured many informative sessions and great conversations about how we can all work more effectively and efficiently in delivering quality transit service. Check out our web site to access many of the presentations and view photos from the conference: <http://mpta-transit.org/event/2016-mn-public-transit-conference-expo>

Next year's public transit conference will be held October 16-18 in St. Cloud – a great central location for everyone – so plan now to attend!

MPTA staff will be in touch to encourage your participation in a couple of projects. MPTA received a grant from APTA to help fund efforts to increase outreach to riders. One of the methods MPTA plans to use to help systems reach out to their communities and to people with disabilities is by providing them with technological information, resources and tools. The range of available technologies for transit systems to utilize continues to grow at a rapid pace. Nationwide, transit systems have incorporated the following tools into their operations:

- ◆ Showing their routes on Google Maps, including route numbers and colors when applicable
- ◆ Building mobile apps and/or websites for riders to use to get real time transit information, pay their fare, etc.
- ◆ Increased use of social media to communicate with riders
- ◆ Adding rideshare (e.g. car2go, Zipcar)/transportation network company (e.g. Lyft, Uber) information to transit websites, maps, etc. to help riders bridge the first and last mile gap often experienced in transit network coverage





With so many options available and often limited resources, transit systems in Minnesota come to MPTA with questions about how to better use technology to assist current riders and reach out to potential riders.

The other project involves outreach to local legislators. We'll be asking you to help set up local visits with newly elected or re-elected legislators so they can learn more the transit service in their area. We make it easy for you and these types of meetings are critical to our success in securing needed funding and political support.

We're always dealing with changing environments and MPTA is working hard to speak up for your system and your needs. Our message is consistent – transit service is important and needs to be expanded. With your involvement, we can all benefit from the support of key policy makers in realizing our goal of expanded, quality transit service all across Minnesota.

As always, contact me at any time with questions, comments or concerns: craig.rempp@co.isanti.mn.us

Craig Rempp

MPTA President

2016 Elections—What Does It Mean For Transit?

Margaret Donahoe

For transit advocates in many parts of the country, the November 8th election results are a mixed bag. On the one hand, ballot initiatives increasing funding for transit projects and systems were largely successful. On the other hand, GOP victories at both the state and national levels have left many advocates worried about the future of transit funding.

Here in Minnesota, we did not have the benefit of direct voter support for funding initiatives. We now have a political dynamic very similar to the situation in 2011 with DFL Governor Mark Dayton needing to work with a Republican controlled House and Senate. In 2011, the state faced a funding shortfall and the session ended with a protracted state government shut down. In 2017, the state will likely enjoy a budget surplus, however it may not be as large as previously projected.

National

Infrastructure investments appear to be a high priority for President-Elect Trump. He stated:

"We are going to fix our inner cities and rebuild our highways, bridges, tunnels, airports, schools, hospitals," Trump said during his acceptance speech after winning the White House. "We are going to rebuild our infrastructure, which will become, by the way, second to none, and we will put millions of our people to work as we rebuild it."

It's not clear how he intends to deal with transit funding in particular. Previous comments include:

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“We have to spend money on mass transit,” Trump said. “We have to fix our airports, fix our roads also in addition to mass transit, but we have to spend a lot of money.”

“China and these other countries, they have super-speed trains. We have nothing. This country has nothing. We are like the third world...”

However, Trump’s support for infrastructure and mass transit are not necessarily shared by the Republicans who continue to control Congress.

The 2016 [GOP platform](#) calls for eliminating federal funding for mass transit, bike-share programs, sidewalks and rail-to-trail projects. According to the GOP platform:

“More than a quarter of the Fund’s spending is diverted from its original purpose. One fifth of its funds are spent on mass tran-sit, an inherently local affair that serves only a small portion of the population, concentrated in six big cities.

Additional funds are used for bike-share programs, sidewalks, recreational trails, landscaping, and historical renovations. Other beneficiaries of highway money are ferry boats, the federal lands access program, scenic byways, and education initiatives. These worthwhile enterprises should be funded through other sources.

We propose to phase out the federal transit program and reform provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act which can delay and drive up costs for transportation projects.

With most of the states increasing their own funding for transportation, we oppose a further increase in the federal gas tax.”

Congressional leaders seem split on whether or not infrastructure investments should be a priority.

House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) said that he supports fixing the nation’s infrastructure and believes it could be a top priority for the lower chamber, though he emphasized that any plans would need to be fully paid for.

In September, Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) — who had a rocky relationship with Trump during the presidential campaign — cast doubt on whether there was hope for major infrastructure legislation in the near future

We passed the biggest highway bill, the long-term highway bill, for the first time since the 1990s just a few months ago," Ryan told the Economic Club of New York in September. "So that's already in place, and 10 percent above baseline spending on mass transit and highways."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has said that he does not agree that infrastructure should be a top priority and would like Congress to focus on other more important issues.

Part of the lack of enthusiasm stems from the premise of Trump’s infrastructure proposal – increased investments will stimulate the economy, generating additional tax revenue that will offset the initial cost to the federal government. This was the same principle behind President Obama’s stimulus plan – the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) which Republicans and conservative groups opposed.



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Dan Holler, spokesman for the group Heritage Action for America, questioned the job-creation claims for such plans, in the same way that conservatives have scoffed at the benefits of President Barack Obama's \$832 billion stimulus.

"Conservatives do not view infrastructure spending as an economic stimulus, and congressional Republicans rightly rejected that approach in 2009," said Holler, whose group is the political arm of the Heritage Foundation.

Trump's pledge for \$1 trillion in investment, based on a proposal crafted by economist Peter Navarro and billionaire financier Wilbur Ross, talks about a "bold, visionary plan...in the proud tradition of President Dwight D. Eisenhower." But it would rely heavily on private funding that's driven by a tax credit — whose cost they say would be offset by tax revenues reaped from the resulting jump in business activity. That tax scheme would apply **only to money-making infrastructure projects like toll roads and airports.**

That language suggests relatively little — in fact, possibly no — investment on the federal level, relying instead on tax breaks to entice the private sector into opening up its wallet.

Voter Support for Ballot Initiatives

Voters in other parts of the country supported many funding packages that will allow for expanded transit service.

Indianapolis area voters approved [a comprehensive transit expansion package](#) that will significantly upgrade bus service throughout Marion County.

Raleigh and the rest of Wake County voted for a similar package of [additional bus service and BRT routes](#), as well as a commuter rail connection to Durham.

Atlanta [handily passed](#) a half-cent sales tax that will expand MARTA's rail and bus networks, as well as a separate measure to fund local complete streets projects.

In Seattle, [a \\$54 billion transit expansion package](#) including 62 miles of light rail appears [on its way to victory](#).

In Los Angeles, [Measure M](#) seems [likely to clear the difficult two-thirds majority](#) needed to pass, generating \$42 billion for new rail and BRT lines over the next 40 years. And in the Bay Area, Measure RR also [garnered enough votes to pass](#), securing funds to repair and upgrade BART for higher capacity.

Minnesota

Minnesota's political landscape was also shaken up as Republicans not only maintained the majority in the House, they captured the majority in the Senate — an outcome that was not expected.

Governor Mark Dayton, who still has 2 years remaining in his term, said he's preparing for a Republican-controlled Legislature that mirrors 2011, when the Democratic governor and GOP lawmakers deadlocked over a budget impasse led to a 20-day government shutdown. Though Dayton conceded Minnesota voters are divided and said he was willing to compromise when he's outnumbered for a second time, he put the blame for 2011's discord squarely on Republicans.

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Democratic Senate Majority Leader Tom Bakk had expected to hang on to a six-seat majority as well. But his caucus suffered losses — seven incumbent Democrats in rural districts lost — and couldn't make up enough ground by winning two suburban seats, including defeating Republican Senate Minority Leader David Hann in Eden Prairie.

The official majority will hinge on automatic recounts in St. Cloud and Plymouth-area districts. Absent a reversal in favor of Democrats, Bakk conceded Republicans will enter 2017 with "a razor thin" majority of just one seat (34-33).

Republicans increased their majority in the Minnesota House, where a seven-seat edge grew to 11 (75-59). Republican House Speaker Kurt Daudt listed tax relief and health care as the top issues — both on the campaign trail and at the Capitol next year.

Assuming the election results don't change, the new Senate Majority Leader will be **Paul Gazelka** from Nisswa. He was elected to the House in 2004, to the Senate in 2010 and was re-elected to the Senate in 2012. Senator Gazelka served on the Senate Transportation Committee during the 2011-2012 biennium. Senator **Michelle Fischbach** from Paynesville will serve as President of the Senate.

At a candidate forum in October, the question of transportation funding was raised. Gazelka said he did not support a gas tax increase to fund transportation, as he felt it was an example of government not living within its means. He preferred the GOP idea of taking money raised by a pre-existing tax on auto parts and reapplying it to roads and bridges, he said. That combined with transportation funding in the bonding bill "would have solved our transportation problem," he said.

Senator **Tom Bakk** will move from serving as Majority Leader to serving as Minority Leader.

In the House, Speaker **Kurt Daudt** and Majority Leader **Joyce Peppin** will continue in their roles while Rep. **Melissa Hortman** from Brooklyn Park will serve as the new Minority Leader. Former Minority Leader Paul Thissen did not seek to retain the position.

At this point, we don't know who the Chairs will be for the Transportation Committees in the House and Senate. Rep. Tim Kelly who had chaired Transportation in the House did not run for re-election. Senator John Pederson, who had been the ranking Republican on the Senate Transportation Committee also did not seek re-election. We'll have to wait for committee chair announcements.

There continues to be agreement among all sides that transportation funding needs to be increased. The disagreement continues to be over how to pay for transportation projects.



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2017 Legislature

Defeated DFL Senators and the new Republican Senator-elect member:

DFL		GOP
Kevin Dahl	District 20	Rich Drahein
Vicki Jensen	District 24	John Jasinski
Lyle Koenen	District 17	Andrew Lang
Tom Saxhaug	District 5	Jusin Eichorn
Matt Schmit	District 21	Mike Goggin
Rod Skoe	District 2	Paul Utke

DFL Senators-elect who won open seats:

- *Erik Simonson
- *Carolyn Laine
- *Jason Isaacson
- *Dan Schoen
- *Jerry Newton
- Matt Little
- Matt Klein
- Nick Frentz

**The first five Senators-elect are current state representatives moving to the Senate.*

Republican Representatives-elect who won open seats:

Regina Barr	District 52B
Barb Haley	District 21A
Nolan West	District 37B

Republican Senators-elect who won open seats:

Paul Anderson	District 44—201 vote margin = recount
Scott Jensen	District 47
Mark Johnson	District 1
Mike Koran	District 32
Jerry Ralph	District 14—142 vote margin = recount

Defeated DFL Representatives and the new Republican Representative-elect:

DFL		GOP
Tom Anzelc	District 5B	Sandy Layman
Ron Erhardt	District 48A	Dario Anselmo
John Persell	District 5B	Matt Bliss
Barb Yarusso	District 42A	Randy Jessup

DFL Representatives-elect who won open seats:

Erin Koegel	District 37A
Mary Kunesh-Podein	District 41B
Jen Peterson	District 54A
Laurie Pryor	District 48A
Erin Maye Quade	District 57A
Julie Sandstede	District 6A

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Get Involved – Get to Know Your Elected Representatives

Successfully increasing funding for Minnesota’s transportation system will take strong advocacy efforts. With so much attention focused on health care costs and tax policy, we will have to push hard to make the case with the public and with lawmakers for a comprehensive, dedicated funding package for transportation.

You can make a difference!

Get to know your newly elected lawmakers. Send a quick email message or letter congratulating them on their election and offering to provide information and guidance on transit issues.

You can find contact information for new legislators here: http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/leginfo/16mem_elect.pdf

A new 2016 Election Directory has been published by the Minnesota House: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/leginfo/elecdir16.pdf>

We have a lot of work to do educating lawmakers about how transportation funding works in Minnesota, what the needs are, what the options are and how they can address this issue. Plan to attend Transportation Day at the Capitol in February where you will have the opportunity to meet new legislators and hear directly from them regarding their views on transportation.

Remember – many candidates made promises on the campaign trail regarding their plans to increase transportation investments. We have to hold them accountable and work harder to make our transportation system safer and more effective.





Upcoming RTAP Workshops & Webinars

These trainings provide transit managers, dispatchers, mechanics, board members, and all other appropriate staff with education and tools to improve rural public transit safety and service delivery in Minnesota. Participation is limited to eligible organizations. Eligible organizations are those that receive Federal Transit Administration funding via Sections 5307, 5310, or 5311.

NEMT webinar

Nov. 30, 2016 from 1-2:30 p.m.

Online

This webinar will cover determining costs and setting rates, and developing contracting strategies for providing NEMT within or as an adjunct to the transportation program. Will be co-presented with MnDOT staff. [Register for the NEMT webinar](#). Registration closes Nov. 28, 2016.

Title VI webinar

Dec. 6, 2016 from 1-2:30 p.m.

Online

This webinar will cover Title VI requirements for 5310 programs, including how to develop an FTA compliant program for agencies that serve specific and limited clientele. Information compiled from the FTA, National RTAP, and the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center. [Register for Title VI webinar](#). Registration closes Nov. 29, 2016.

Building proficiency in financial management workshop

Dec. 13, 2016 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

[MnDOT St. Cloud Training Center](#) - Lewis Grand Room

This one-day in-person workshop covers revenue and expense management, cost allocation, indirect vs. direct costs, farebox revenue, and determining contract rates. Transit systems will learn a standardized basis for cost allocation for the organization as a whole and the transportation services in particular. [Register for building workshop](#). Registration closes Dec. 6, 2016.

Driver retention follow-up webinar

Dec. 15, 2016 from 1-2:30 p.m.

Online

This webinar will recap the strategies shared at the conference idea café for recruiting, hiring, and retaining drivers and other personnel. Additionally, content will be developed to address the challenges raised during the idea café and examples of strategies employed around the country will be shared. [Register for driver webinar](#). Registration closes Dec. 12, 2016.

Metro Bus Haunted Trolley Visits Pumpkin Fest

Submitted by BERTA HARTIG

More than 2,000 people visited the Metro Bus Haunted Trolley at the City of St. Cloud's Pumpkin Fest this fall. Metro Bus participates in large community events as part of its marketing efforts. Several staff volunteered their time and talents to make this event extra "spooktacular."





New Metro Bus website features trip planning tool, how to ride videos in three languages

Submitted by BERTA HARTIG

The Metro Bus website, ridemetrobus.com, has been redesigned to include a new trip planning tool and updated how to ride videos in English, Spanish and Somali languages to help visitors learn how to plan a trip, use the farebox, board the bus with wheelchairs or strollers, how to use the bike rack, and more.

“Our goal with the new website is to make Metro Bus more user-friendly,” said Berta Hartig, Marketing and Communications Manager for Metro Bus. “People have told us they don’t have the time or patience to figure out bus schedules. With our trip planner, you just need to know where you are, where you want to go and what time you want to be there. Our tool does the figuring out for you.”

In addition to basic trip planning information the Metro Bus trip planner tool allows customers to check the next departures for a particular stop, view timetables and see which other routes they can transfer to nearby.

Hartig said the trip planner is in beta/test mode and welcomes people to share feedback to help improve the tool. An email link is provided on the trip planner’s results page.

Metro Bus will continue to provide printed schedules on all buses, at the Transit Center, the Mobility Training Center, and select locations throughout the community. Metro Bus encourages anyone who needs extra assistance learning how to ride the bus to contact the Metro Bus Mobility Training Center for free, personalized travel training. Their phone number is 320.529.4497.

MPTA Members in the News

Duluth Transit Authority

[As longtime managers near retirement, DTA plans ahead for new era](#)—Duluth News Tribune

Rochester Public Transit

[Rochester Public Transit starts four new bus routes](#)—KIMT

SMART Transit

[SMART to expand public transportation services in Steele County, three others](#)—Owatonna People’s Press

Tri-Valley Heartland Express

[Tri-Valley receives federal award recognizing 'outstanding' work in rural transit](#)—Grand Forks Herald

United Community Action Partnership

[Transportation changes coming for Lincoln County](#)—Marshall Independent



News

MVTA Sponsors Stuff the Bus Campaign, November 28th to December 9th

Submitted by *ROBIN SELVIG*

The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) is asking riders, drivers and staff (and any others), to Stuff the Bus! Bring foodstuffs to area transit stations per the schedule below, in order to meet the needs of local food shelves during the holiday season.

“I am committed to MVTA being part of our community,” said Luther Wynder, MVTA Executive Director. “I have been involved in a similar promotion in Delaware and believe this will be very successful for MVTA.”

“There is such a terrific need during the holidays,” said Laurie Bolin, Director of Development at 360 Communities, “360 Communities is grateful to have a partner like MVTA in the community. These food donations will help us stock our network of five food shelves in Dakota County and help ensure that families in need will not go hungry during this holiday season.”

Schmittly and Sons Transit Project Manager Connie Massengale was also excited to participate in this promotion. “This is a great way to involve drivers, riders and the entire community in a critically needed activity. Schmittly and Sons is pleased to provide the bus for this promotion,” she said.

The goal is to STUFF one (or more) buses with food and other needed items and deliver them to 360 Communities. 360 Communities operates food banks in Apple Valley, Burnsville, Farmington, Lakeville and Rosemount. MVTA is also partnering with our transit provider, Schmittly and Sons Transit, for the transportation and delivery of the food.

Highest need items are canned fish & meat, peanut butter, canned fruit & vegetables, rice & pasta, and cooking/baking items. Personal items, such as toothpaste, deodorant and feminine hygiene products are also in demand. Cash will also be accepted in the fare box.

We invite residents of all of our communities to also drop off items at the Transit Stations and ask that everyone give generously during this season of high need for the food shelves. We forward to collecting a busload of items!

A FULL BUS FOR A GOOD CAUSE.



5 MOST WANTED FOOD DONATIONS



Canned Fish & Meat



Canned Fruit & Vegetables



Rice & Pasta



Peanut Butter



Cooking & Baking Goods



Schmittly & Sons





Monday Nov. 28	Tuesday Nov. 29	Wednesday Nov. 30	Thursday Dec. 1	Friday Dec. 2	Saturday Dec. 3
6:30-8:30 a.m. Marschall Road Transit Station, Shakopee 3-6 p.m. Rosemount Transit Station	All day (7 a.m. – 6 p.m. estimate) Apple Valley Transit Station	6:30-8:30 a.m. Savage Park & Ride 3-6 p.m. Southbridge Crossings Park & Ride, Shakopee	6:30-8:30 a.m. Heart of the City Park & Ride, Burnsville 3-6 p.m. Eagle Creek Park & Ride, Shakopee	All day (7 a.m. – 6 p.m. estimate) Burnsville Transit Station	9 a.m. – 12 noon Apple Valley Transit Station
Sunday Dec. 4	Monday Dec. 5	Tuesday Dec. 6	Wednesday Dec. 7	Thursday Dec. 8	Friday Dec. 9
10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Burnsville Transit Station	6:30-8:30 a.m. Cedar Grove Transit Station, Eagan 3-6 p.m. 157 th St. Transit Station, Apple Valley	6:30-8:30 a.m. Blackhawk Park & Ride, Eagan 3-6 p.m. Savage Park & Ride	6:30-8:30 a.m. Marschall Road Transit Station, Shakopee 3-6 p.m. Cedar Grove Transit Station, Eagan	6:30-8:30 a.m. Eagan Transit Station 3-6 p.m. Palomino Hills Park & Ride, Apple Valley	10 a.m. Deliver to 360 Communities

MVTA and SMSC Join Forces to Transport Workers to Prior Lake

Submitted by ROBIN SELVIG

MVTA and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) are joining forces to provide transportation for people who work at Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Little Six Casino and the SMSC government. MVTA currently operates Route 495 between Mall of America, Burnsville Transit Station and Marschall Road Transit Station in Shakopee. The SMSC will provide buses at the Marschall Road Transit Station and shuttle employees to Mystic Lake, Little Six and the SMSC government beginning Dec. 1.

Route 495 operates seven days per week with daily service (41 trips) from about 4 a.m. to 12 midnight. Trip times were selected in conjunction with the needs of Shakopee employers as well as employees of the SMSC and its enterprises.

“MVTA is committed to the success of Route 495,” said Executive Director Luther Wynder. “We want to be creative in order to ensure that this partnership with the SMSC is a significant step in the right direction.”

Angela Heikes, president and CEO of the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community Gaming Enterprise, said, “The collaboration with MVTA is a good opportunity to provide additional and affordable transportation options for our team members, many of whom commute from around the Twin Cities area to work at the Community’s Enterprises.”

In addition to the shuttle service, Mystic Lake, Little Six and the SMSC are also in the process of working with Metro Transit to implement the MetroPass program, which will allow employees to ride regional transit buses at a reduced rate. That program is also expected to launch Dec. 1.

Fare toolbox grows with introduction of new mobile app

By BRIAN LAMB, General Manager at Metro Transit

When people leave their homes, there are a few essential items they're likely carrying with them, including identification, credit or bank cards and a mobile phone.

Less likely to be in their pocket: a [Go-To Card](#) or the exact change it costs to board a bus or light-rail train.

Confusion about the fare and the need to have the right amount ready to board has long been a challenge for new or infrequent riders, sometimes discouraging them from using transit altogether.

Ticket vending machines that accept cash and credit cards at rail and rapid bus stations helped us begin to address this challenge. This week, we took another major step forward as we introduced a [new Metro Transit app](#) that allows people to buy and instantly use fares using a smartphone.

With the app, customers can purchase mobile tickets in advance and use them when they're ready to ride. These customers will prove they've paid their fare by showing bus operators or police officers a screen with a unique, moving image that can't be replicated or used after time has expired.

Created in partnership with tech company [moovel](#), the app also provides access to our website's most popular trip planning tools. In the future, it will give customers a simple way to let us know about immediate concerns and to receive alerts about the routes they most often use.

Operators and police have been trained to recognize valid mobile tickets over the last several months and a number of employees have successfully tested it in the field over the last few weeks.

Time will tell how the successful the app and mobile ticketing will be in attracting new customers, but there are several reasons to believe it will be a powerful tool. Consider:

- > Nearly 7 in 10 U.S. adults own a smartphone, and a [third have used them to make a mobile payment](#). Our largest customer group, Millennials, are even more likely to own a smartphone and use it to make purchases. For many low-income residents, smartphones are the only reliable access to online resources.
- > The Twin Cities has become a top tourist destination, attracting more than 30 million visitors a year. An even greater number of visitors will arrive in the coming years for the Super Bowl and other large events. While special fare products that serve travelers have been introduced, mobile tickets are more immediate and convenient.
- > About 72 percent of our website's visits are from mobile devices and 16 percent of fares are sold through our [online store](#). Use of a new service that allows customers to [access NexTrip information by text message](#) has grown exponentially since being introduced last June.

There are advantages for our operations, too. Cash-paying customers take more time at the farebox when boarding and face longer lines when buying tickets after large events. Customers who use mobile tickets will board just as efficiently as those using Go-To Cards.



While there are several clear advantages, the number of customers expected to use mobile tickets is likely to be small – we hope they will account for around 5 percent of all fare payments within the next year.

But getting customers to purchase their fares through the app on a regular basis isn't really our goal. Instead, we want the app and mobile ticketing to move transit up on the list of options people consider when making a trip, eventually earning their trust so Go-To Cards become just as indispensable as their smartphones.

Nelson takes Bus Roadeo title

Submitted by DREW KERR

Operator David Nelson, #69177, has been competing in the Bus Roadeo since he joined Metro Transit seven years ago.

And while he participates in the annual skills competition mostly for fun, he admits he genuinely hoped to come out on top. After placing in the top 20 several times, this was the year that finally happened.

“I think it had a lot to do with experience,” Nelson said after receiving his trophy at South Garage. “I’ve learned how to perfect each obstacle over the years.”

Operators who compete in the [Bus Roadeo](#) go through a series of obstacles that test their driving skills on a closed course. The competition also include a written customer service exam and a uniform inspection.

Nelson earned a nearly perfect score – 621 out of a possible 625 points. Those skills carry over to the road, too: he’s yet to have a responsible collision during his career.

Nelson will now represent Metro Transit at the American Public Transportation Association’s International Bus Rodeo, which will be held next year in Reno, Nev. Other top competitors will participate in the state Bus Roadeo, hosted by the Minnesota Public Transit Association.

Metro Transit’s 2016 competition drew a record number of competitors, including a large number of operators who were hired within the last five years.

Other top finishers include:

- > **Second Place:** Heywood Operator Jack Berner, #8927 (Berner has won Metro Transit’s Bus Roadeo five of the last nine years, including 2014 and 2015)
- > **Third Place:** Heywood Operator Michael Stenberg, #71018 (Stenberg won Metro Transit’s Bus Roadeo in 2013)
- > **Fourth Place:** East Metro Operator David Palm, #2410
- > **Fifth Place:** Nicollet Operator Douglas John, #72493

Operator Randy Webb, #207, was named the **Garage Champion** for the Martin J. Ruter Garage

- > **Rookie of the Year:** East Metro Operator Ger Yang, #64137



2017 Save the Dates

MN Statewide Bus Rodeo

July 14th and 15th

Fergus Falls, MN

MPTA Conference and Expo

October 16th to 18th

St. Cloud, MN

Vendor Expo Tuesday, October 17th

mpta-transit.org/events

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Send submissions for the next *InTransit* to laura@transportationalliance.com.