



in transit

Minnesota Public Transit Association



Metro Transit ridership hits 27-year high with 6.1 percent increase in 2008

MINNEAPOLIS/ST PAUL – Metro Transit has reported that customers boarded buses and trains nearly 82 million times in 2008. That's the highest annual ridership for the state's largest transit provider since 1981.

Metro Transit ridership for the year was up 4.8 million over 2007, an increase of 6.1 percent. It continues a positive growth trend that has developed in recent years.

"Ridership has grown by 17.4 percent in the past four years," said General Manager Brian J. Lamb. "That's a testament to the growing demand for transit service in the region and to the quality that people are experiencing when using our services." Growth was recorded on express routes – up 7.4 percent over 2007 to 9.7 million rides – as well as on urban local routes, which grew by 7 percent to 60 million.

For the first time, Lamb said, the Hiawatha light-rail line surpassed 10 million rides for the year, up 12 percent over 2007. During weekday rush hours, commuters boarded trains an average of 37,000 times.

Part of Metro Transit's 2008 growth came from employer- and school-based fare programs, which increased by 27 percent to 12.7 million rides. Commuters at 215 companies who offer the Metropass unlimited-ride fare card took 8 million trips on buses and trains; University of Minnesota students using U-Passes and students at participating colleges and trade schools using the Go-To College Pass added 4.7 million rides.

Lamb said that Metro Transit employees have maintained their commitment to quality while serving the largest number of people in decades.

Lamb credited technology enhancements made in 2008 with making transit more accessible to residents who are looking for options that are affordable and environmentally friendly.

For example, customers used the interactive trip planner at metrotransit.org to create 5.6 million itineraries last year, an increase of 40 percent over 2007. Another innovation, the NexTrip real-time bus tracker, which can be accessed online, by phone and by mobile device, had peak-period usage of about 55,000 sessions per hour in December.

In addition, each month nearly 5,000 people are visiting metrotransit.org to buy or add value to a Go-To Card, a reusable card that offers instant fare payment for bus and train rides.

Ridership on transit services throughout the metropolitan area in 2008 grew by 6.5 percent to nearly 95 million rides. The Metropolitan Council, which oversees regional transit, reported that more than 13 million rides were taken on contracted routes. Metro Mobility, the region's transportation service for people with disabilities, grew by 12 percent to 1.5 million rides. Metro Transit is a service of the Metropolitan Council.



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 an exciting time and once again public transit is riding the roller coaster of good news and bad news. Through it all, the Minnesota Public Transit Association is working for you. We're monitoring all the action and fighting for transit funding for all Minnesota systems.

On the federal level, the news is very good. The Obama administration has clearly decided to make public transportation a higher priority. In speeches and in budget documents, transit and passenger rail are receiving more attention. The American Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) will provide much needed funding for transit capital including bus purchases and facilities as well as transit projects. For Minnesota, these dollars will definitely help even though there is a more urgent need for operating funds.

Minnesota's share - \$92 million - will provide capital funding for:

- \$73 million for Urbanized Area (5307) (Twin Cities, Duluth, St. Cloud, Rochester, Moorhead, La Crescent) with \$67 million for Metropolitan Council. Fifty percent of the funds have to be obligated within 180 days and the other 50 percent within 1 year of bill enactment (Feb. 17, 2010)
- \$19 million for Capital funding Non-urbanized Areas (5311) – fifty percent of funds have to be

obligated within 180 days and the other 50 percent within 1 year of bill enactment (Feb. 17, 2010).

■ \$7 million for Fixed Guideways – Twin Cities Metropolitan Area

■ New Starts - \$750M nationally. A competitive grant process will be used for distribution of the funds. Northstar Commuter Rail costs would qualify but the Central Corridor transitway does not.

The big winner in ARRA legislation was high speed passenger, receiving a whopping \$8 billion after Congressional committee had recommended \$1-3 billion.

Although the details will not be released until April, the President's budget appears to favor public transportation as well and with a new six-year surface transportation authorization bill in development, this could be a great year at the federal level for transit. The Minnesota Public Transit Association will be represented in Washington at this year's Fly-In by myself and Sherry Munyon. We will be talking with members of Minnesota's Congressional Delegation about the need for increased, stable funding for transit systems in Minnesota.

At the state level, the news is very bleak. A serious, historic budget deficit is putting all state spending from the general fund at risk. The competition will be fierce among all the groups vying to keep their budgets somewhat intact. Transit advocates need to be vocal! Legislators need to hear from you and the people who rely on transit service in your community. Even a few letters telling a compelling story about someone who really needs transit service to get to work and to remain independent can make a difference.

We know that operating budgets are risk and unless legislators hear from their constituents, transit service may be reduced, leaving people without the transportation they need. Please do your part to get the message out about the importance of transit service in Minnesota.



Legislative Update

Margaret Donahoe
Legislative Director
Minnesota Transportation Alliance

With all of the bad news on the economic front dominating the headlines, it's been a waiting game at the Capitol for the release of the February, 2009 Budget Forecast. With the new budget numbers from the forecast, the Legislature can get to work in earnest to put together a budget plan for the remainder of this biennium and the 2010-2011 biennium.

The February forecast projects a very serious problem, but one that is not as bad as it could have been thanks to federal funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) passed by Congress. However, it's important to remember that these are one-time funds and will not help with ongoing costs. We knew from the November forecast that the budget deficit for the coming biennium was going to be huge. If the budget were balanced through cuts alone, every area of state government funded with general fund dollars would have to be cut by 14 percent. That's a big hit. The magnitude of the budget problem remains historic and the legislature and governor will have their work cut out for them trying to balance the budget.

The new numbers indicate that the budget deficit will be \$4.57 billion compared to the \$4.8 billion projected with the November forecast. However, the economy has weakened since November and without the federal funds that the state will receive, the deficit would have been \$6.4 billion for the biennium. So that basically means that the structural deficit is around \$6 billion and the Legislature will need to deal with the structural problems.

Federal economic stimulus dollars will also help with the current biennium. The increase in funds is projected to provide a surplus of \$236 million for the current biennium, allaying fears that more cuts would be needed after the governor's allotment of funds made earlier.

The bottom line: transit advocates need to remain vigilant and contact legislators about the importance of transit service. The ultimate budget solution will undoubtedly involve some level of cuts and could involve an across-the-board cut of all areas funded by the state. We need to also push for other solutions besides budget cuts so that services are not dramatically impacted.

Given the serious recession the state is facing, people need public transportation more than ever. People need transportation to jobs or to look for work, to get to doctor's appointments, and to remain independent members of their communities. The demand for transit service is growing and transit systems have a role to play in helping to get people back on their feet while reducing congestion, pollution and our dependence on foreign sources of oil.

Now is the time to:

- Send an e-mail or call your legislators. Not sure how? Visit www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/Districtfinder.asp to check out who your legislators are and www.leg.state.mn.us to get e-mail addresses and telephone numbers.
- Let people in your community who rely on transit service know the risk of budget cuts to transit systems.
- Send a Letter To The Editor to the local newspaper telling a story about someone who uses transit service.

The state is facing historic budget issues. If legislators don't hear from constituents about the need for transit service, they will have plenty of other issues to focus on as they struggle to come up with a solution to the funding gap.





MVTA reports ridership growth

BURNSVILLE –The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) experienced record ridership again in 2008, ending the year up nearly 7 percent above the record 2007 ridership level. Total ridership for the year was 2,638,883.

MVTA express ridership grew by 3.2 percent, according to MVTA Chair and Burnsville Mayor Elizabeth Kautz. “This was significant,” Kautz said, “because we had no increase in capacity on our buses, and many of our park & ride facilities are at or near capacity.”

The largest ridership increases were on local routes, and Kautz said that local ridership grew 11.7 percent, and Sunday ridership in Eagan (Route 445) and Burnsville (Route 444) grew 8.6 percent. “Our average daily boardings increased by 500 over the same period in 2007, to nearly 10,000 average daily boardings. “At this rate,” Kautz said, “the MVTA expects to pass the 30,000,000th boarding mark in late January 2009.

“Ridership was high this past year due, in part, to high gasoline prices,” said Beverley Miller, MVTA Executive

Director. “But we did not experience a drop in ridership when gas prices dropped – once people found the bus reliable and relaxing, they stayed with us,” she said

We believe that local ridership is heavily dependent on the cost of driving, while express ridership is also dependent on the cost of downtown parking,” Miller said. “Our significant increase in ridership clearly shows that our continued commitment to providing high quality local bus service is being met with strong acceptance by our communities.

MVTA expects to continue ridership growth with the Urban Partnership Agreements (UPA) improvements planned for the I-35 and Cedar Avenue corridors. Gas prices have also started to inch upwards again and the MVTA provides excellent service for a reasonable price. Miller continued, “We also look forward to the implementation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in the Cedar Avenue and I-35W corridors, which we believe will only spur additional ridership growth because of better service to our communities.”

MVTA is the public transportation provider for residents and businesses of Apple Valley, Burnsville, Eagan, Rosemount, and Savage.



MVTA celebrates 2008 Drivers-of-the-year

EAGAN –The Minnesota Valley Transit Authority (MVTA) presented its 2008 Driver-of-the-Year Awards to Barbara Derrick and Elizabeth Johnson of Schmitt & Sons and a special award for Schmitt & Sons’ Shop Foreman Tom Delmonico for his stellar work in the area of maintenance. Recipients featured in photo below: Seated from left, Barb Derrick (Eagan), full time driver of the year; Tom Delmonico (Lakeville), shop foreman and special award winner; Beth Nelson (Apple Valley), part time driver of the year. Standing from left: Dan Schmitt, Schmitt & Sons owner; Jon Ulrich, Scott County Commissioner/MVTA Board member; Beverley Miller, MVTA Executive Director; Liz Workman,



Dakota County Commissioner/MVTA Board Alternate; Jane Victorey, Savage Councilmember and MVTA Board member; Ruth Grendahl, Apple Valley City Councilmember/ MVTA Board member; Elizabeth Kautz, Burnsville Mayor/ MVTA Chair; William Droste, Rosemount Mayor/MVTA Board member; Paul Leidner, owner of Schmitt & Sons.



DTA ridership up 12.8 percent with 3.2 million riders in 2008

DULUTH –Duluth Transit Authority ridership for 2008 surpassed the 3 million rider mark for the first time since 2002 when ISD 709 ended its contract with the DTA for transporting students. Total ridership for 2008 increased by 12.8 percent over 2007 with 3,219,756 passengers carried.

Prior to 2002, approximately 9.65 percent of the passengers carried were secondary school students that were transported under the terms of a contract with ISD 709. Following the cancellation of the contract by the School Board, the DTA reduced its peak hour fleet from 62 to 45 buses, and personnel from 98 employees to 86.

In 2000, the DTA established a new U-Pass program with UMD, which was later expanded to all area colleges. While transit use is up by all segments of the general population, bus travel by college students participating in the U-Pass program has shown the most consistent gains.

U-Pass ridership for 2008 at UMD, College of St. Scholastica, Lake Superior College and UWS increased by 36 percent over 2007 with 693,291 rides. U-Pass ridership for September 2008 of nearly 100,000 rides was the highest monthly total since the program began in 2000 with an increase of 72 percent over September 2007.

DTA Bike & Bus ridership for 2008 also surpassed last year’s total. In its 14th year of operation, the Bike & Bus service transported 20,107 bicycles during its seven month season – up 25 percent over last year.

STRIDE (Special Transit RIDE) ridership for 2008 also increased by 3 percent with 24,519 rides.

DTA ridership gains for 2008 parallels the national trend. More Americans today are using public transportation due to volatile gas prices and inflation. Even though fuel prices have subsided since last fall, DTA ridership continues to grow.

“We’re very pleased with these numbers” says DTA General Manager Dennis Jensen. “We picked up a lot of new riders during the surge in fuel prices and they are continuing to ride. We are especially pleased with the success of the U-Pass program and all the benefits that this has brought to the colleges and to the community.”



Higher fares proposed for Northstar Commuter Rail Line

Even before the first train has run, the cost to ride the Northstar rail line into downtown Minneapolis could jump 50 cents for commuters at its farthest stops.

The Metropolitan Council’s transportation committee is proposing that one-way fares rise to \$8 for the trip from Big Lake into Minneapolis, up from \$7.50. The fare from Elk River would rise from \$5.50 to \$6. The rest of the fares would remain the same as they were in a plan rejected in the fall.

The 40-mile Northstar Commuter Rail line is expected to carry 5,000 passengers daily once it makes its debut late this year.

A proposal in September that would have set fares ranging from \$3.25 to \$7.50 one way was rejected after Met Council leaders said the prices were too low. Officials said then that they wanted the fares to cover about a third of the cost to operate the rail line — about what riders pay for other bus and light-rail services in the Twin Cities area.

But Northstar commuters would have to be charged \$10 for a one-way trip from Big Lake in order to get 30 percent “farebox recovery.” The money generated from the newly proposed fares is projected to cover about 21 percent of the line’s operation costs, Met Council officials said.

A Big Lake City Council member who sits on the Northstar Corridor Development Authority — which includes members from counties and cities along the rail line — expressed concern this fall about the \$7.50 fare. If gas prices stay low, riders from Big Lake would probably think twice before paying \$8 to travel on the line, Chuck Heitz said.

The new proposed fares along the route include:

- Big Lake: \$8
- Elk River: \$6
- Anoka: \$4
- Coon Rapids: \$4
- Fridley: \$3.25

Public hearings have been tentatively scheduled to discuss fares for the Northstar Commuter Rail line:

- April 8: Downtown Minneapolis Library; Noon to 1 p.m.
- April 8: Sherburne Government Center, Elk River; 7 to 8 p.m.
- April 14: Anoka Government Center, Anoka; 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.



SouthWest Transit awarded Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

EDEN PRAIRIE – For the second year in a row, the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to SouthWest Transit by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management.

An Award of Financial Report Achievement has been awarded to the individual(s), department or agency designated by the government as primarily responsible for preparing the award-winning CAFR. This has been presented to: Finance Department, SouthWest Transit. The CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel to meet the high standards of the program including demonstrating a constructive “spirit of full disclosure” to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 16,000 government finance professionals with offices in Chicago, IL and Washington, D.C.

SouthWest Transit reports double digit ridership increase for 5th year

For the fifth year in a row, SouthWest Transit experienced a double-digit increase in ridership. A total of 1,146,829 rides were given in 2008, an increase of 13.3 percent over 2007, when ridership on SWT first reached the one million rider mark.

“Even though gas prices decreased later in the year, SouthWest Transit continued to see an increase in ridership,” said Chief Executive Officer Len Simich. “Our rider survey indicates that 89 percent of our riders ride by choice, and have a car available to make their trip. They realize the benefits riding the bus offers in comfort, ease and savings.”

SouthWest Transit opened two new Park and Ride facilities in 2008: East Creek Transit Station in Chaska and SouthWest Village in Chanhassen.

2008 was great year for SouthWest Transit

The year 2008 brought several well-deserved honors to SouthWest Transit. The agency was named Minnesota Transit System of the Year by the MN Public Transit Association. The American Public Transit Association presented SouthWest Transit with its National Gold Award for Safety and Service Reliability. For the second year in a row, the Government Finance Officers Association awarded its Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting to the SWT Finance Department.

“These awards are not about one person or one team doing the right thing. It’s about everyone working together to make sure we provide the best in service, safety and accountability to our riders and the public,” said Chief Executive Officer, Len Simich.

Construction was finished on two new Park & Ride facilities – SouthWest Village in Chanhassen and East Creek Transit Station in Chaska – which added over 650 parking stalls along the new TH212 corridor.

Ridership increased by 13.3 percent, and in November SouthWest Transit successfully demonstrated the first double-decker bus service in the Twin Cities.

One of the biggest challenges SWT will face in 2009 is maintaining its level of service in the face of declining funding. “Our goal is to minimize as much as possible any negative impacts to both our riding customers and staff,” said CEO Simich. “We will do our best to maintain all operating performance, system quality, system reliability, system safety and customer satisfaction accomplishments achieved in 2008.”

Projects planned for 2008 include finalizing plans for a ramp and station in downtown Chanhassen, determining the best plan for bus garage facilities (expansion or a new facility), and determining a site and plans for a future ramp and station in Chaska.

SouthWest Transit (SWT) provides express and local bus service to residents of Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska and surrounding communities. SWT operates eight park-and-ride lots, including its main hub, SouthWest Station in Eden Prairie. Transit information can be found online at www.swtransit.org.





Transit in the News

Central Corridor LRT Update



Noise and vibration impacts can be mitigated at MPR

Vibration impacts will be less than they are today after proposed mitigation measures are employed by the Central Corridor LRT Project along Cedar Street in front of Minnesota Public Radio in St. Paul. Vibration mitigation measures will include installation of a 700-foot-long concrete “floating” slab under the track on Cedar Street to isolate vibration away from the MPR building, the Church of St. Louis King of France, Central Presbyterian Church, McNally Smith Recording Studios and the Fitzgerald Theater. Project engineers already have relocated a track crossover previously sited on Cedar Street in front of MPR to a location north of Interstate 94 where it will not affect noise and vibration sensitive or historic buildings. A crossover is a track structure that allows continuous passage between two



Engineers put a Hiawatha LRT horn and bell system on the back of a pickup to test noise impacts to Cedar Street buildings.

nearby and generally parallel tracks. The proximity of the tracks, which are 14 feet from the closest point of MPR’s new building, makes vibration mitigation necessary.

Noise mitigation will include on-site modifications to MPR Studios M and P to mitigate the transmission of outdoor noise and create more acoustically isolated recording studios. Metro Transit also will modify its practice of activating horns each time trains meet at grade crossings, such as the intersection of Seventh and Cedar streets.

Project engineers are working with MPR’s noise and vibration experts to develop additional mitigation details that would be acceptable to MPR.

Elsewhere on the Central Corridor route, resilient track fasteners will be installed on Washington Avenue through the East Bank of the University of Minnesota, where several sensitive laboratories are located.

The start of LRT heavy construction will be delayed from early summer to late summer 2010 because the Federal Transit Administration told project officials to address MPR’s concerns about noise and vibration impacts in greater detail and because the FTA will need more time to complete its risk assessment of the project. The delay, though, won’t affect the projected start of service on the line in 2014.

Central Corridor LRT Update

Making Tracks



Advanced technology is big at St. Cloud Metro Bus

By Leah Harnack , Mass Transit Magazine

When I first met staff from the St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission (Metro Bus) at the American Public Transportation Association's Annual Meeting in Charlotte, N.C., the one thing they were stressing was the extensive use of technology at the agency, especially for one their size.

For the advanced technology at the agency, Executive Director David Tripp credits a lot of that to Tony Kellen, director of operations and technology. "When it comes to technology in this agency, he's just done miracles," Tripp states. "We're advanced for an agency our size because of his natural interest in technology. It's been done for less dollars compared to what others, even our own size, are paying because he's done a lot of it internally directly, or he's developed and coded the software locally as opposed to buying off the shelf software." At this time Kellen and Sleekcode Consulting, LLC are into their third year of writing what the agency refers to as the "MetroNet", an SQL and browser based software platform. The system ties together a centralized SQL database with all the agencies other backend SQL databases.

This approach links together the agency's Traverse accounting, RTA fleet maintenance, Trapeze Pass © dial-a-ride dispatch and AVL, Mentor Streets © fixed route dispatch and AVL, and GFI Genfare ridership and revenue collection databases into one record keeping and reporting system accessible from any internet browser. Features operational in the system include extensive employee tracking, driver certifications, drug, alcohol and random testing, training, customer service, agency wide scheduling and time clock system, payroll and benefit tracking, fleet liability and workers compensation claims, asset tracking, project management, national transit database on-board surveys and document management. Numerous canned reports have been developed across multiple databases and a custom SQL report generator is integrated for in house reporting.

Other systems they have in place include a complete bus signal priority throughout the metropolitan area and a "paperless" shop in the maintenance department with barcoding of parts. Metro Bus went paperless in the shop about four years ago. According to Ed Yorek, maintenance manager, it was a surprisingly smooth transition. "I think people are more scared of it then they need to be. "The mechanics, we never had a lot of resistance there. We told them this is what we're going to do and they had to

understand that," he explains. "The initial response was, 'We're not computer people.

But it's not that way, Yorek explains. "Just a little bit of getting used to, but the transition was easy." He adds, "Right now if you go out there and ask them, I doubt that anyone would go back to paper anymore." "It takes less time than writing out paper work orders and it's electronically stored right away." He also talks about how the barcoding of parts has been a big help to the agency. "It's more accurate on work orders now," Yorek says.



Ed Yorek, maintenance manager, demonstrates the scanner they use at Metro Bus to facilitate bar-coded parts and a paperless shop.



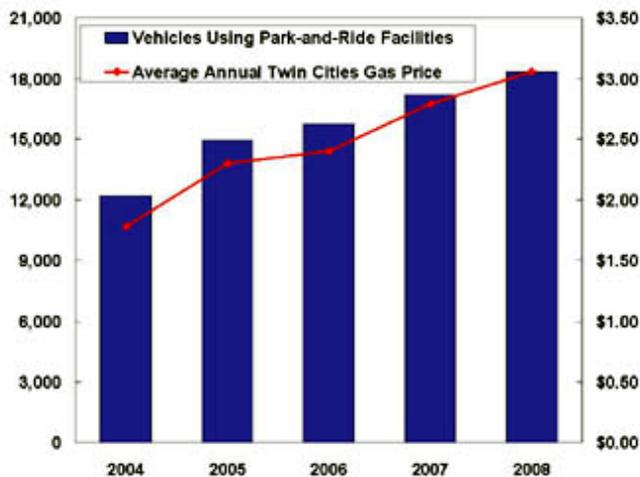
Bar-coded parts help Metro Bus maintain what they need while keeping costs down.

METRO BUS

More people choosing to park and ride

As capacity at park-and-ride facilities across the metropolitan area increases, so too does the demand by commuters who use them.

A recent survey showed that use of the region's park-and-ride lots grew nearly 7 percent over the last year, increasing by 1,150 commuters. During the same period, approximately 2,200 parking spaces were added to the system, bringing the total capacity to 26,000.



The number of commuters using park-and-ride facilities has grown along with gas prices.

Growth in commuters' use of the system in the last year slowed slightly in comparison to 2007, when use of facilities grew by 11 percent over 2006. That growth was due in part to commuters using park-and-ride lots after the collapse of the I-35W bridge. "The economic slowdown and recent drop in fuel prices appear to have curbed the surge we observed during the previous year," said Metro Transit Facilities Planner Charles Carlson.

But a spike in fuel prices this past summer may have helped convince a growing number of commuters to park their cars and board a bus or train to get to work or school, leading to the steady growth of use at facilities in 2008, Carlson said.

Despite expansion, some lots are over capacity

Over the past 10 years, regional transit providers have more than doubled parking capacity. At the same time, commuters' use of the system has tripled, starting from nearly 6,000 in 1999 to more than 18,000 this past year.

In 2008, 11 new facilities were added, including a 1,450-space parking ramp at the 28th Avenue Station of Hiawatha light rail. Two facilities expanded – the Apple Valley Transit Station and the South Bloomington Transit Center – adding more than 400 parking spaces to the mix.



In 2008, 11 new facilities were added, including a 1,450-space parking ramp at the 28th Avenue Station of Hiawatha light rail.

Despite the expansion, demand at some locations is outpacing capacity. "Overall, system use is at 70 percent, but one-third of the facilities are near, at or over capacity," Carlson said.

In the next two years, transit providers plan to expand, replace or add eight facilities – including six projects associated with the Urban Partnership Agreement – to help deal with demand. In the next five years, nine additional projects are planned, mostly along the outer edges of the metropolitan region. Additional park-and-ride facilities are included in the region's 2009-2014 Capital Improvement Program and the Council's 2030 Transportation Policy Plan in anticipation of future growth.

Commuters driving from long distances

As part of the annual survey, transit agencies, counties and other partners count the number of vehicles in the park-and-ride facilities in late September and early October. In 2008, staff also took the license plate number of each vehicle parked at lots to determine the users' starting locations.

About three-fourths of the commuters come from inside the transit taxing district, which is composed of communities in which the Metropolitan Council levies a tax for investment in regional transit capital projects. About 15 percent are outside the transit taxing district but still come from within the seven-county metropolitan area, with the remaining driving in from neighboring counties and beyond – even as far as St. Cloud, Rochester and Mankato.





Minnesota Public Transit Newsletter

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

MN Public Transit Association

Executive Officers:

President — Tony Kellen, St. Cloud Metro Bus
Vice-Pres. — Jack Larson, Arrowhead Transit
Treasurer — Jacqueline Forner, Chisago/Isanti
Secretary — Amy Repinski, Three Rivers
Past President — Linda Elfstrand, Tri-Cap

Board of Directors:

Roxanne Emerson, Washington County;
Michael Frisch, Tri-Valley; Alan Herrmann, CART; Dave Jacobson, Southwest Transit; Tim Kirchoff, Anoka County; Mike Klauda, North Central Bus; Anthony Knauer, Rochester; Gregory Negard, Paul Bunyan Transit; Mike Opatz, Maple Grove

Contributors

Minneapolis Star Tribune / Pioneer Press
Laura Baenen — Central Corridor LRT
Linda Spevacek — Southwest Transit
Margaret Donahoe — Transportation Alliance
Tom Elwell — Duluth Transit Authority
Jacqueline Forner — Chisago Heartland Express
Bob Gibbons — Metro Transit
Berta Hartig — St. Cloud Metro Bus
Leah Harnack — Mass Transit
Bruce Howard — Metro Transit
Tony Kellen — St. Cloud Metro Bus
Robin Selvig — MVTA
Metropolitan Council Directions

SEND NEWS

telwell@duluthtransit.com

Heartland Express lights up Cambridge Snowflake Parade

CAMBRIDGE – Every year since the Cambridge Snowflake Parade was started Chisago/Isanti Heartland Express wanted to enter a bus in the parade.

Since Cambridge now has its own "City Bus", Transit Manager Jacqueline Forner thought this would be a great time to plan for the parade. She turned the job of lighting and decorating the bus over to their new master mechanic, Greg Reid, and his helpers – drivers Rochelle Knight, Dennis Carpenter, office staff Susie Lehner and parade driver Christine Reynolds.

The project turned out wonderful! The cost was minimal since most items were donated. Greg Reid used the frame from the bike rack on the front of the bus to build a platform on which to fasten down the Christmas tree with lights and gifts. Windows were trimmed with colored tube lights and a small generator was mounted under the rear bumper to run the lights. Snowflake festivities started off in the afternoon with a Chili Feed and the parade goers were treated to floats and bands from around the region.



In Transit Bulletin Board

Transit Events

September 21-23

Bi-State 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. Register for classes by completing the form posted on the Office of Transit's web-site at: www.dot.state.mn.us/transit/RTAP/Form/index.html. See RTAP training calendar 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.



Bridge the gap with RTAP