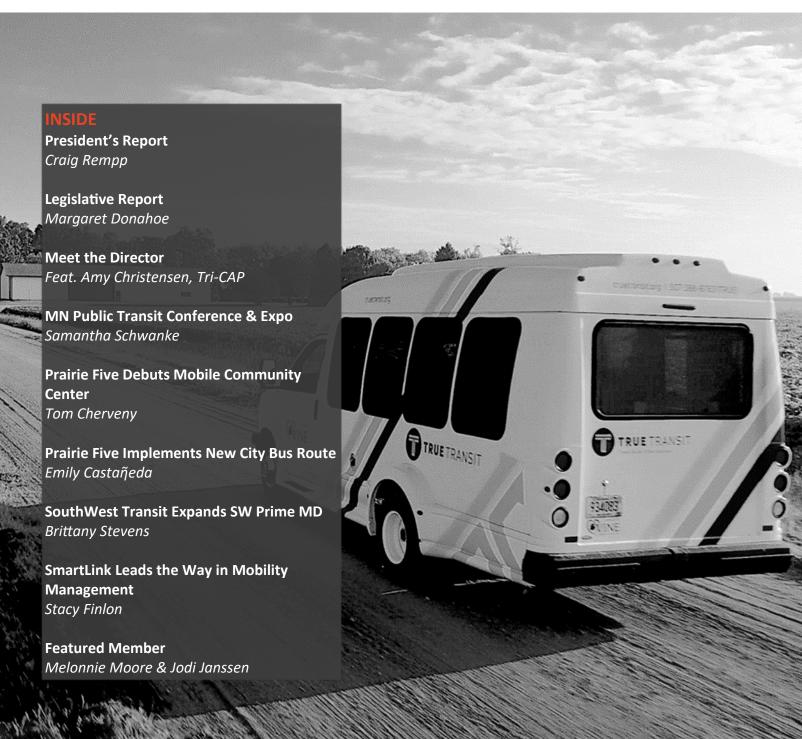


A quarterly newsletter published by the Minnesota Public Transit Association.

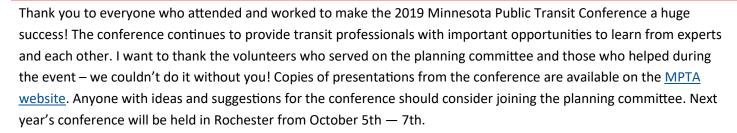
Edition



President's Report

Craig Rempp

Transit Director Greater Mankato Transit System



MPTA continues to work closely with the Office of Transit and Active Transportation on a number of important issues. We're monitoring the allocation of operating grants, bus replacement funds and capital facility grants. OTAT received \$234M in funding requests for system operations and \$230M will be awarded for the coming two-year period. For new service (Operating and Capital) – OTAT received \$14.7M in NSE requests with \$8.4M budgeted for 2 years.

For vehicle replacements, among the rural systems (5311), there were a total of 87 vehicle replacements requests for calendar year 2020, of which 48 were funded. Of these 48 vehicles, 44 were Class 400's, with an average mileage of 169,908, an average age of 8.23 years, and the average corrective maintenance costs was \$32,700 over the life of the vehicle. Small urban systems requested 23 vehicle replacements for calendar year 2020, of which 18 were funded. Of these 18 vehicles, 5 were Class 400's, with an average mileage of 245,244 and an average age of 9.6 years. Nine of the vehicles were Class 700's with an average mileage of 426,522 and an average age of 16.67 years. For facilities, \$5.2 million has been awarded for 2020. It's clear from the requests for funding and completed 5-year transit plans that funding needs vastly outweigh available dollars. We'll need to keep advocating for funding increases as needs grow.

MPTA will be working through its legislative committee to develop requests and policy positions for the 2020 Legislative Session. We'll be looking at addressing barriers to volunteer driving, funding for capital and vehicle needs, and reminding legislators of the need for ongoing funding increases to address growing demand for service. If you have concerns about transit policy issues that could be addressed through legislation, please let me know.

Another program that MPTA participates in is the RTAP program. Many of you provided input at the transit conference regarding topics for training sessions. The RTAP program now has a new web site: www.mnrtap.us. This site will include a catalog of training sessions for you to review and sign up to attend, as well as provide important resources related to the program.

We'll be contacting systems regarding the System Profiles we are developing with information from the five-year plans. Please be sure to send us feedback. These are being developed as tools for all us to use with local officials, legislators, the news media and others. Having specific needs and information on each system will give us a much better opportunity to educate people and advocate for additional resources for transit in Minnesota.

As 2019 winds down, I want to wish you Happy Holidays and a safe and enjoyable holiday season. At MPTA, we're here to work for you so let us know what you need and how we can work together to improve transit service across Minnesota.

Legislative Report

Margaret Donahoe

Executive Director Minnesota Transportation Alliance

The 2020 Legislative Session in Minnesota will focus on the capital bonding bill, since the two-year budget was passed last year. Many committees will also put together omnibus policy bills, which change laws without making funding changes. Depending on the outlook from the February budget forecast, there may be a supplemental budget bill, but in even-numbered years, these tend to make small budget changes.

For transit systems, the capital bonding bill could provide important funds through general obligation bonds to help pay for transit capital projects. Bond funds have to be used on facilities with at least a 20-year life so buses are not eligible for GO bond dollars. The Metropolitan Council has requested \$50 million in bond funds to assist with the cost of building additional Bus Rapid Transit lines.

Adding to existing BRT lines, Metro Transit has plans for the D Line which will substantially replace Route 5 service between Brooklyn Center, Minneapolis, Richfield, and Bloomington, the B Line which will provide faster and more reliable transit service in the Route 21 corridor along Lake Street and Marshall Avenue, and the E Line, a planned bus rapid transit (BRT) line that will provide faster and more reliable service in the Route 6 corridor along Hennepin Avenue, University Avenue/4th Street, and France Avenue. BRT brings better amenities, faster service, and a more comfortable ride.

MnDOT is requesting \$15 million in GO bond funds to assist with the development of transit facilities in Greater Minnesota. A number of transit systems are planning new facilities to better protect assets and maintain additional vehicles.

In the area of transit policy, MPTA will be working on issues related to volunteer drivers including the definition by clarifying Minnesota Law to ensure that volunteer drivers receiving funding from the public transit participation program are not for-hire carriers. The other big issue has been volunteer driver reimbursement. We would like to see a change in the federal mileage rate (now 14 cents) to be the same as the IRS business rate, currently set at 58 cents per mile.

The need for increases in stable, ongoing funding continues to be an issue. Last session, the legislature passed a two-year transportation budget bill that did little to address the funding shortfall for transit in Minnesota. Transportation stakeholders, including MPTA, are working to develop a strong coalition and consensus on a comprehensive transportation funding package that would provide additional dedicated funding for transit – both in the metro area and in Greater Minnesota. Working on this effort throughout 2020 and into the 2021 Session will lay the groundwork for action and will highlight the need to make transportation funding a higher priority.

At the federal level, Congress continues to talk about the need to increase funding for infrastructure. The

most likely vehicle for this goal is the reauthorization of the federal FAST Act, the surface transportation authorization act that is set to expire at the end of September in 2020. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee passed the highway title for a new multi-year authorization act earlier this year. The Senate legislation needs to be put together by several different committees, including the committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs which puts together the transit title.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Peter DeFazio has presented a plan to his Democratic Caucus for reauthorization. The legislation is still being drafted but reportedly, rather than opt simply for a highway bill, DeFazio is aiming big, embracing a plan to modernize the transportation industry — the largest source of greenhouse gases — by embracing automated vehicles and intelligent transportation roadways.

In the midst of impeachment hearings and discussions, Congress is also facing deadlines for passing the federal budget. Funds continue to flow thanks to Continuing Resolutions, but the FY2020 budget remains to be enacted.

The House and Senate have passed differing versions of the budget for transportation which will need to be reconciled. Here is how things are shaping up:

	FY 2017 Enacted	FY 2018 Enacted	FY 2019 Enacted	FY 2020 House Passed	FY 2020 Senate Committee Passed
Core Highway Program (HTF)	\$43.3 billion	\$44.23 billion	\$45.27 billion	\$46.35 billion	\$46.35 billion
Supplemental Highway Investment (GF):					
Surface Transportation Block Program		\$1.98 billion	\$2.73 billion	\$1.49 billion	\$1.25 billion
Nationally Significant Federal and Tribal Lands		\$300 million	\$25 million	\$166 million	\$100 million
Highway Bridge Program		\$225 million	\$475 million	\$0	\$1.25 billion
Puerto Rico and Territorial Highways		\$20 million	\$21 million	\$6.9 million	
Accelerated Digital Construction Management Systems		\$0	\$0	\$15 million	
Rail-Highway Crossings		\$0	\$0	\$50 million	
Regional Infrastructure Accelorator Program		\$0	\$0	\$12 million	
National Highway Geo-Spatial Data Set		\$0	\$0	\$5 million	
Tribal Safety Research		\$0	\$0	\$2 million	
•		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$100 million
Total Highway Investment	\$43.3 billion	\$46.76 billion	\$48.52 billion	\$48.1 billion	\$49.05 billion
Airport Improvement Program (AATF)	\$3.35 billion	\$3.35 billion	\$3.35 billion	\$3.35 billion	\$3.35 billion
Supplemental AIP (GF)		\$1.0 billion	\$500 million	\$500 million	\$450 million
Total AIP Investment	\$3.35 billion	\$4.35 billion	\$3.85 billion	\$3.85 billion	\$3.8 billion
Transit Formula Grants (HTF)	\$9.73 billion	\$9.73 billion	\$9.94 billion	\$10.15 billion	\$10.15 billion
Capital Investment Grants (Authorized GF)	\$2.3 billion	\$2.3 billion	\$2.3 billion	\$2.3 billion	\$1.95 billion
Capital Investment Grants (Supplemental GF)	\$100 million	\$350 million	\$250 million	\$0	\$0
Supplemental Transit Grants (GF)					
Buses		\$404 million	\$357 million	\$490 million	\$393 million
State of Good Repair		\$400 million	\$263 million	\$250 million	\$40 million
High Density State Apportionments		\$30 million	\$40 million	\$0	\$40 million
Rural Area Grants		\$0	\$40 million	\$0	\$40 million
Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant Program				\$10 million	
Low/No Emmision Bus Grants					\$40 million
Innovative Mobility Solutions Grants					\$7 million
Total Transit Investment	\$12.1 billion	\$13.21 billion	\$13.19 billion	\$13.2 billion	\$12.66 billion
BUILD (TIGER) Grants (GF)	\$500 million	\$1.5 billion	\$900 million	\$1 billion	\$1 billion

Meet the Director

Samantha Schwanke

Program Coordinator Minnesota Transportation Alliance

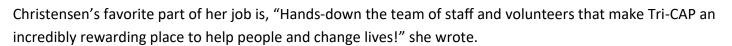


Meet the Director is a column to introduce readers to new transportation directors of public transit systems in Greater Minnesota. This issue's column features Amy Christensen, Director of Transportation Services at Tri-CAP, Inc.

Christensen has been with Tri-CAP for one year, but has worked in the non-profit sector for over 25 years. She has worked "in transit for the majority of that time, much of it focused on transportation access and advocacy for persons with disabilities," she wrote, "I have worked with local human service transit coordination plans, written grants for 5310 funding, and served on local advisory councils that promote equality in transportation access."

The successful launch of public transit services in Mille Lacs County has been Christensen's biggest achievement with Tri-CAP. The project was led by the Executive Director and the Operations Managers before Christensen started with the organization.

Overall, the process took a year and officially launched in early 2019.



Outside of work, Christensen enjoys outdoor activities, such as "hunting, fishing, athletics, and a good bonfire," she wrote.

III-CAP



Minnesota Public Transit Conference & Expo



Thank you to everyone that attended, volunteered, participated in, and sponsored the 2019 Minnesota Public Transit Conference and Expo in St. Paul in October. At MPTA's Annual Meeting, we announced the winners of this year's Transit Awards. They are as follows:

Distinguished Career

Scott Thompson, Metro Transit John Dillery, Metro Transit Steve Mahowald, Metro Transit

Transit Professional of the Year

Voni Vegar, Arrowhead Transit

Transit System of the Year

Minnesota Valley Transit Authority

Management Innovation

Prairie Five Community Action Council, Inc. Mobile Community Center

Minnesota Operator of the Year

Theresa Collins, Metro Transit Pete Mugg, St. Cloud Metro Bus

Friend of Transit

Charlie Sanow, Lyon County



Congratulations to all of our winners! If you'd like to view this year's session presentations, please visit our website: https://www.mpta-transit.org/event/2019-minnesota-public-transit-conference-expo.

Next year's conference will be at the Mayo Civic Center in Rochester on Monday, October 5 through Wednesday, October 7.



Over 60 vendors, providing access to products and services that benefit Greater
Minnesota's transit systems.

12 educational sessions given by a variety of transit professionals, as well as two keynote speakers.



The Transit Awards Ceremony, as well as a reception hosted by First Transit, for networking and socializing with colleagues and friends, old and new.

THE STORP



"Minnesota Public Transit Conference and Expo"

Prairie Five Debuts Mobile Community Center

Tom Cherveny

Regional Reporter
West Central Tribune
Read the full article here



The future has come first to five counties in the Upper Minnesota River Valley...A community center on wheels, and a truck specially equipped to deliver hot and frozen meals to people in remote, rural homes.

"I think of it as a kind of 21st century innovation that we're going to have to look at doing in a lot of different communities," said Daniel Pollock, assistant commissioner for continuing care for older adults with the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

...Prairie Five retrofitted a former transit bus to serve as the mobile community center. It comes complete with high-speed internet access, a coffee maker and comfortable seating for eight.

The mobile center made its maiden trip on Tuesday[, August 20] to Graceville with Laura Thomas, age friendly coordinator for Prairie Five, at the wheel. She said it is designed to go to small communities and rural farm places to provide people with access to everything from



L to R: Angela Nissen, Sean Nurmi, Laura Thomas, and Erick Hedman

telemedicine services and Skype connections to distant family or as a place to gather with friends to visit, get information on Medicare, or to join for services such as blood pressure screening.

The mobile community center is believed to be the first in the state, as is what Prairie Five calls its "hot/cold" truck. The truck has been...making weekday routes, each more than 100 miles, to people in homes scattered about rural locations...State grant funding through a program known as Living Well at Home makes it possible for Prairie Five to offer these services.

Prairie Five's goal is to provide services to seniors in their homes so they can continue to live independently, Thomas said. Prairie Five serves the rural counties of Big Stone, Lac qui Parle, Chippewa, Swift and Yellow Medicine. These counties are the testing grounds for the future because of their demographics: Nearly 23 percent of the population in the five counties of the Upper Minnesota River Valley are age 65 and over, Thomas said...

Yet like everywhere else, most of the region's seniors want to remain in their homes, said Thomas and [Angela] Nissen [, outreach and aging and adult services program director for Prairie Five]. In many cases, that means rural farm places located miles from a small town. There are more than 22,000 people in nursing homes across the state, and taxpayers benefit by programs that allow more people to remain independent, according to Pollock. Rural Minnesota is seeing four to six nursing homes close each year, Pollock said, largely because more people are staying in their homes.

People want services delivered to their doors, he said. That's why the state is keenly interested in what Prairie Five is offering here, he explained.

Prairie Five Implements New City Bus Route

Emily Castañeda

Administrative Assistant Prairie Five RIDES



As the need for public transportation continues to grow in greater Minnesota, Prairie Five RIDES is taking public transportation in rural Minnesota a step forward with the implementation of a fixed route in the City of Montevideo. Prairie Five currently operates dial-a-ride city bus service in the City of Montevideo which provided nearly 50,000 rides last year. On a daily basis, the city bus service maintains a consistently full schedule that during peak hours obligates passengers to wait upwards of one hour to receive transportation. To offset the heavy schedule and provide passengers with an alternative, Prairie Five is introducing the fixed route bus service to meet the community's transportation needs. This is the first fixed route to be implemented in Prairie Five's five-county service area which includes Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift, and Yellow Medicine Counties.

Prairie Five's Transit Advisory Committee and the Prairie Five Community Action Board determined the implementation of a fixed route service in Montevideo as a priority in February of 2019 while developing a five-year transit service plan; a plan aimed at improving service and meeting passenger needs in the operating area. After analyzing trip data from the year 2018, fourteen stops were established along a one-hour long route that circles the community of Montevideo. The route stops include local businesses, apartment buildings, and other locations intended to serve residents. The hour-long schedule was developed to allow sufficient time to travel between stops and account for passenger boarding times. Each time on the schedule is a departure time, which means that the bus will travel by a strict schedule and require that passengers are ready to board prior to the departure time. Although this will be a change for both passengers and drivers, it will assist the route bus to maintain on-time performance and a schedule passengers can depend on.

Prairie Five approached the City of Montevideo administration and also held public open houses to seek input for the new route service, as it was important to staff to create a route that accommodated passengers as well as businesses along the route. These meetings and open houses were largely successful and helped generate a lot of positive feedback. This feedback helped RIDES staff to refine the schedule and other details that would make the route easily understood and accessible to the public. Prairie Five staff feel that the community feedback that was received will be key to the success of the new service.

The route was officially named RIDES Express and incorporates a distinctive logo on the bus to make it identifiable to passengers. Bus stop signs will be installed at each stop location which will include a schedule available for passengers to reference. RIDES Express will run Monday through Friday from 7:00 AM to 5:00 PM with a break between 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM for driver change over and safety checks. Literature on riding the bus and scheduled departure times will also be made available on the bus, throughout the community, and upon request through the dispatch office.

RIDES Express service was designed as a complimentary service to the dial-a-ride city bus service which will continue to serve the community. Passengers will continue to have the option of using both services to meet their transportation needs. Free Wi-Fi will also be available to passengers.

RIDES Express will begin December 2, 2019 and to celebrate the new service, Prairie Five will be offering free rides to

passengers using the new service for the month of December. Beginning January 1, 2020, riding with RIDES Express will cost \$1.00 per one-way trip. RIDES Express punch cards will be available for passengers to purchase, although punch cards and passes issued for the city bus will also be accepted.

With the guidance and approval of the Prairie Five Community Action Council Board of Directors, the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Office of Transit and Active Transportation, and the City of Montevideo, Prairie Five is excited to offer residents of Montevideo another option in public transportation. Prairie Five is eager to begin the new RIDES Express fixed route this December and encourages any one with questions or comments on this route to contact the dispatch office at 1-877-757-4337 or at rides@prairiefive.org. RIDES is always looking for public input on improving transportation service for residents in their service area and urges community feedback as they begin this new endeavor.



SouthWest Transit Expands SW Prime MD

Brittany Stevens

Marketing Coordinator SouthWest Transit



SouthWest Transit's non-emergency medical transportation service, SW Prime MD, is expanding its service area. Beginning Nov. 18, SW Prime MD will provide service to all medical facilities in Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska, Carver and Victoria. Ridgeview Medical Center and Ridgeview Specialty Clinics in Waconia, Ridgeview Excelsior Clinic, and select areas of Minnetonka and Edina will also be included in the SW Prime MD service area.

SW Prime MD makes getting to non-emergency medical appointments both easy and affordable. Rides can be booked as far out as 14 days in advance. Customers are picked up from any location within Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska, Carver or Victoria and can be taken to any medical facility within the SW Prime MD service area. When their appointment is complete, customers simply contact SW Prime for a return ride. Going to the appointment, the fare is \$10 for all scheduled rides. On-demand return rides are only \$5 when paying with cash or \$5.25 when paying with a

credit card.

Ridgeview is assisting with reducing the cost even further by providing a \$5 subsidy for all customers riding to a Ridgeview facility, which brings the cost down to only \$5 to get to appointments at those clinics. Children 5 and under ride for free.

SW Prime MD operates Monday-Friday from 6:30 am to 7:00 pm. Customers can request their ride during business hours by calling 952-SW-PRIME (952-797-7463).



"Affordable transportation can be huge barrier when it comes to accessing the medical care that people need," said SouthWest Transit Chief Executive Officer Len Simich. "We are excited to be able to offer the people in our community an affordable and reliable option to get to those important appointments."

SouthWest Transit (SWT) provides express and local bus service to the residents of Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska, Carver, and surrounding communities. SWT operates five park-and-ride locations, including its main hub, SouthWest Station in Eden Prairie. Additional information and complete schedules for SWT can be found at www.swtransit.org or by calling our customer service line at 952-949-2BUS (2287).

SmartLink Leads the Way in Mobility Management

Stacy Finlon

Marketing Coordinator SmartLink



Mobility Management means helping communities and individuals create and manage their mobility options. This concept is customer-focused and begins with a community vision in which an entire transportation network works together to deliver transportation options that best meet a community's needs. For Scott County, this network includes public transit, on-demand ride services, private operators, volunteer drivers, cycling, and walking. The future network may very soon include additional ride-sharing options such as carsharing, bike sharing, scooter sharing and yes, autonomous vehicles.

Finding and leveraging transportation solutions in Carver and Scott Counties can often be a challenge for individuals. Smaller communities without public transit often rely on Dial a Ride services or a network of volunteer drivers, friends and family to help individuals without a vehicle get to their appointments. SmartLink not only helps link people to existing transportation solutions but is also very customer focused on identifying gaps based on individual communities and not the County as a whole.



SmartLink recognizes that the challenges and gaps that exist in smaller communities much different than those in larger cities. By taking an approach of putting the customer first, SmartLink Mobility Management encourages innovation and flexibility to reach the "right fit" solution for customers. By continually incorporating customer feedback, transportation services are evaluated and adjusted based on need.

SmartLink has also made several investments in new technology and services for Carver and Scott Counties. A new transportation scheduling software, Novus, was implemented in the summer of 2019. This new web based technology has improved efficiencies in many areas such as automated trip assignments for providers, billing, and is much more stable resulting in less downtime that reduces staff time. SmartLink has also made an investment that is very people-centric, a Travel Trainer. The role of Travel Trainer directly benefits those individuals that live and work in Carver and Scott County that would like to understand what transit solutions are available. Think of a Travel Trainer as being Carver and Scott County's very own "transportation expert" available to work with individuals as well as groups and help them understand and navigate mobility options.

The SmartLink Mobility Management team begins and ends with understanding and advocating the many customer groups in the two counties; current and potential riders, employers, students, aging adults, and those with disabilities. Transportation is integral to almost all activities that take place within a community and integrated into other community services such as housing, healthcare, and employment. SmartLink-Linking People to Transportation.

Featured Member

Melonnie Moore; Marketing & Executive
Assistant to Tom Klein; Hoglund Bus Company, Inc.

Jodi Janssen; Commercial Bus Sales Administrator; North Central Bus & Equipment, Inc.



Featured Member is a column to introduce readers to our vendor members. This issue's column features Hoglund Bus Company, Inc. Hoglund Bus Company has sponsored and participated in MPTA events for many years. They were founded in 1947 as a school bus service contractor and today, have grown into a full-service dealer. Several product lines of commercial buses were added in the mid 1990's and because of their growth, Hoglund has now opened several locations: Marshalltown, IA; Janesville, WI; and their pride and joy, the Holly Hoglund Klein Service Center located in Bloomington, MN.

Hoglund carries several different Commercial Bus manufacturers such as Champion, Turtle Top and Glaval Bus. From retail to government transit agencies, they have been able to help provide several options for many local entities. They also carry several van manufacturers which allow the end user the option of a smaller vehicle. Van manufacturers such as Primetime and Waldoch Crafts are able to modify these vans to allow the use of wheelchair occupants as well as ambulatory passengers. They also have a full service and parts department, which specialize in the support of these units far after the initial purchase.

Thank you, Hoglund, for being a member!

This issue is also featuring North Central Bus & Equipment, Inc., which has a new home in Saint Cloud. North Central now has all of their team members and departments under one roof, which has created efficiencies and is allowing them to better serve their customers. Their new shop is larger, and features updated equipment, including multiple lifts and a crane; so no matter the job, they can continue to take care of their customers in the way customers have come to know and expect from North Central.

The Parts Department and Bus Sales Departments have separate entrances, so customers can get to



the right person, right away. Customers waiting for vehicles to be repaired or upfitted can enjoy the new spacious and comfortable waiting area. North Central's used inventory is right out back, making it convenient for their used vehicle customers as well.

Their new address is 25112 22nd Avenue in Saint Cloud. They are located just south of I-94; look for the bright red roof behind RHL, Inc. and Littfin Truss. They hope you'll stop by and say hello!

MPTA Members

Vendor Members

A&J Mobility

Alexander Dennis

American Seating

AngelTrax Mobile

Arow Global Corp

CalStart

CMI Enterprises

CTS Software Inc

Gerflor USA

Hanover Displays

Hoglund Bus and Truck

Kelderman Air Suspension

LHB, Inc

Odyssey Battery

PCTrans

REI

Rosco Vision Systems

Schmitty & Sons

Wendel Companies

WSB

Public Transit Organizations

Anoka County Transit (270)

Arrowhead Transit-AEOA (261)

Becker County Transit (518)

Big Woods Transit (552)

Brainerd/Crow Wing Transit (290)

Brown County Heartland Express (292)

Central Community Kandiyohi (375)

Chisago-Isanti Heartland Express (300)

City of East Grand Forks RR & DAR

City of Hibbing

City of La Crescent

Duluth Transit Authority (331)

Fond-du-Lac Band of Lake Superior

Fosston Transit (302)

Granite Falls Heartland Express (303)

Greater Mankato Transit System (386)

Hubbard County Heartland Express (361)

Maple Grove Transit System

MN River Valley Transit (522)

MN Valley Transit Authority

Moorhead Metro Area Transit (307)

Morris Transit (308)

Paul Bunyan Transit (429)

Plymouth Metrolink

Prairie Five RIDES (517)

Prairie Lakes Transit

Prairieland Transit System (637)

Productive Alternatives, Inc. (Otter)

Rainbow Rider (438)

Red Lake Transit (439)

Rochester Public Transit (311)

Rolling Hills Transit (454)

SMART (1410)Albert Lea

SmartLink Transit

SouthWest Transit

St. Cloud Metro Bus (467)

Three Rivers Hiawathaland Transit (477)

Timber Trails Public Transit (401)

Trailblazer Transit (478)

Tri-CAP Transit Connection (491)

Tri-Valley Heartland Express (492)

Community Transit

University of MN Transportation Service

VINE Faith in Action (503)

Wadena Friendly Rider Transit (347)

Watonwan County Take Me There (507)

White Earth Reservation Tribal Council

Winona Transit Service (312)

InTransit



"Like" and "Follow" MPTA on Facebook and Twitter for news from MPTA members and local and national media coverage of transit news and issues.