

Supporting the needs of Texas' public transportation systems through statewide advocacy and education.

Dear Members and Friends of TTA,

It is with great pleasure and responsibility that I have accepted the position as Executive Director of the Texas Transit Association. Prior to this position, I was with Waco Transit System for fifteen years. During this time, I have worked for both a Rural and a Small Urban System and had the pleasure of working very closely with TTA. Having hosted two Conferences and Bus Rodeos while at Waco Transit System, I know first hand exactly how much work this position entails.

For this reason, I am honored to have the support of the Board, and I am looking forward to the opportunity to continue serving the Texas Transit Association.

As I look forward to this next chapter of my life, I see many great opportunities and a positive future for the TTA. I believe that the TTA must be a collaborative voice for public transportation throughout the state. During our recent Board of Director's Workshop in San Antonio, I had the opportunity to hear first-hand the Boards goals and expectations of me for the future. However, I am also very interested in hearing from each of you, both members and non-members alike. I want to know what your expectations are so that I can better understand how to serve you. During the recent months, I will be reaching out to each agency to introduce myself and to start a conversation about your expectations from both our Association and myself. My commitment to you is that I intend to have a presence, be engaged and do everything I can to maximize the value of your membership.



Left to Right: Bob Patrick, Allen Hunter, Mario Delgado, Don Koski and Gail Lyssy during a recent visit with FTA in Ft. Worth

For example, this year we will be hosting our State Rodeo, Conference and Expo in Mc Allen, TX from April 3rd- 8th. (Please mark these dates on your calendar.) I am looking forward to the opportunity to get to work with you during one of the State's largest conferences and expos. As we plan this event we need to hear from you. If there are topics or speakers that you are interested in please feel free to reach out to me. You are also welcome to serve on one of our many committees such as our Education and Events Committee.

This year, there will also be several networking opportunities including member meetings which are to be held in Austin, TX during January and July. In addition, training sessions will be hosted at various locations around the state.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to serve each of you and thank you for your support of the Texas Transit Association.

Allen E. Hunter
Executive Director
Texas Transit Association



**TTA's State Rodeo,
Conference and Expo will
be April 3rd – 8th
in McAllen, Texas!**





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Sun Metro welcomes six renovated Presidents' Conference Committee Streetcars

Sun Metro recently welcomed home six renovated Presidents' Conference Committee (PCC) streetcars, which operated on the City of El Paso streets between 1950 and 1974.

Each streetcar is painted in one of the city's three original color schemes from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s and have an original look and feel with single and double interior seats and accommodations for riders needing wheelchair access.

Sun Metro Director Jay Banasiak says, "It's an authentic car, but we've added some things to it to make it more modern. Wi-Fi, air conditioning, LED boards and accessibility for disabled riders are among those modern upgrades."

The streetcars run in two loops, through El Paso's uptown and downtown areas, serving a total of 27 stops. Both loops will interconnect an international bridge, numerous businesses and restaurants, government buildings, the University of Texas at El Paso and other locations.



El Paso's transportation history began with the introduction of mule-drawn cars in 1882, carrying passengers to and from the U.S. and Mexico. The city began operating electric streetcars by the 1890s and bought 17 of the streamlined PCC streetcars from San Diego in 1950. The El Paso Streetcar underwent a four to six month safety approval process. A series of rigorous testing including items such as overhead contact system (OCS) tests, track testing, load testing and other safety certifications (approved by the Texas Department of Transportation) have been completed successfully and have been fully operational since November 2018.

GoBus receives award from AT&T Special Districts Programs

GoBus has started the purchase of 8 Promasters. Since we cover 14 counties and 10,000 square miles, we are excited to try these new smaller vehicles when traveling long distances to pick up passengers. These vehicles will provide a more cost effective and efficient way to move our citizens.

GoBus recently received an award from AT&T Special Districts Programs for implementing a new fare system with the use of Square credit card processing to provide a more dynamic and efficient way to collect fares from passengers. The entire operations staff was involved in educating passengers and drivers on the new system.

GoBus has partnered with area colleges to implement service that will provide routes by the colleges to pick up students that do not own vehicles.



The FTA requests your feedback!



The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requests your support in completing its first safety stakeholder survey. This survey provides an opportunity for public transportation agencies, State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) and State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) to provide valuable feedback regarding the quality of FTA's services to support your safety programs and activities.

This survey focuses on those agencies responsible for drafting Agency Safety Plans and certifying compliance with FTA's Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation, 49 C.F.R. Part 673. FTA aims this survey towards agencies that report to the National Transit Database (NTD) and report Urbanized Area Formula Program (49 U.S.C. 5307) as a source of funds or the use of a transit vehicle purchased using 5307 funds **OR** to State DOTs with responsibilities for developing and certifying an agency safety plan on behalf of their sub-recipients. If, after reviewing FTA's applicability graphic (please see: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/safety/public-transportation-agency-safety-program/ptasp-applicability>), you find that your agency is not required to develop an Agency Safety Plan, and you do not expect your State DOT to draft an Agency Safety Plan on your agency's behalf, please disregard this survey request.

FTA's survey has three main goals:

- Collect information regarding where each responding agency is in the process of developing an Agency Safety Plan;
- Obtain feedback regarding how useful FTA's PTASP resources have been in supporting their activities; and
- Identify additional topics, considerations, and requests for FTA guidance and support.

FTA will use the results of this survey to support a robust program of technical assistance for the agencies covered under the PTASP regulation. FTA's survey can be accessed at the following URL:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PTASP_survey This survey should take no more than 10 to 15 minutes to complete. **This survey is voluntary and no information you provide will be used by FTA in any evaluation or assessment.** Thank you in advance for your participation and support in completing this survey by **Friday, October 25, 2019.**

The Texas Transit Association welcomes new member, Mesmerize Transit

Mesmerize works exclusively with 55+ city, county, and regional transit agencies, representing over 1,500 buses, paratransit vehicles, commuter rail assets, and shelter/bench panels across the country. In Texas, Mesmerize works alongside both urban and rural transit authorities and is proud to partner with STAR Transit, Alamo Regional Transit, SWART, and CARR. Also, Mesmerize was recently named the exclusive advertising sales representative for REAL Transit and The HOP.

With over 15 years of transit and operations know-how, Mesmerize also boasts a national sales team working with the largest advertising agencies across the country! As the sole insured advertising sales and operations agency for their partners, Mesmerize is responsible for the handling sales, production, installation, and financial reporting at no cost to your agency!

If you're interested in transit advertising and the revenue stream it can create, please don't hesitate to reach out to Brent Wingert (brent@mesmerize.com) and see how their blend of national and local expertise will drive significant growth through a community-oriented platform! (www.Mesmerize.com).





SWART's Rise from the Ashes

The Southwest Area Regional Transit District (SWART) reached a grand milestone in June of this year. SWART celebrated and marked its 7th anniversary as a standalone district by hosting its annual Try Transit Week in which riders received free and discounted fares as well as agency staff being honored at an appreciation luncheon. The celebration was more than an anniversary milestone, but also a means of counting their blessings for having survived a very trying year of change.

In August 2018, SWART was faced with the loss of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) funds for the first time in over 25 years. With the loss of 70% SWART's matching funds and 40% of its ridership; the agency was forced to make drastic changes such as reduction in staff, services, and costs. The loss of the

NEMT services was due to the agency experiencing a decrease in MTP assignments from their broker as well as an increase of costs due to "taxi" like one passenger long distance trips which were not cost effective. SWART made a decision to no longer provide such services and within a few weeks found themselves having to make difficult decisions with staff layoffs, cost reductions, as well as revise their service delivery system.

"We are here standing tall and can proudly say that there is life after giving up NEMT", declares SWART General Manager, Sarah Hidalgo-Cook. SWART which services eight counties in the Middle Rio Grande Region of Texas contributes its survival over the past year as joint efforts from their board of directors, staff, community leaders, and TxDOT PTN. The first basis for concern after walking away from providing NEMT services was to implement a conservative cash flow plan and seek alternative means of local match while exercising a cost reduction plan throughout the entire agency. Over a period of nine months, SWART began to see the fruits of their efforts.

"It caught us by surprise as a management team on how much of our existence was related to providing NEMT services for so many years. Our thought processes, the daily operations, and routes were primarily NEMT driven that we actually knew no other way to operate", added Hidalgo-Cook. How did SWART change their way of thinking? In the spring of this year, SWART requested through TxDOT-PTN and the Rural Technical Assistance Program for the Texas A&M Texas Transit Institute (TTI) to facilitate a strategic planning workshop. The auspices of the workshop was to assist SWART in restructuring its focus of providing rural public transit services without NEMT services. This included revisions to its mission and vision, development of goals and objectives for the next five years, and to revise its organizational structure along with revised comprehensive job descriptions of all staff.

SWART's management team held the workshop July 11-12 off site and isolated from the normal work environment in which TTI set the tone by providing an inclusive review of the agency's past and present. "We went through this process 7 years ago when we transitioned into a standalone system and it was exciting to see how many goals set back then were accomplished. It was a nice pat on the back for us to see all the positives over the past 7 years. It was also tough to self-reflect and see the areas where we fell short of our goals, but it was rejuvenating for us so we could plan our future. We want to refocus and move forward to bigger and better things without depending on NEMT funds to survive", states Hidalgo-Cook.

SWART's new vision is to "be the leader in quality public transportation in the Southwest Region". With the assistance of TTI, SWART's management team also developed a new missions "to provide safe, reliable public transportation with integrity to guide mobility enhancements in support of our communities' quality of life to benefit local economic development".

Despite all the changes over the past year, SWART's rise from the ashes and the ability to reinvent themselves has fueled their motivation to be creative, seek partnerships, be open minded, and to also be grateful for all their blessings. They strive to improve daily because at the end of the day it's about the communities they serve.



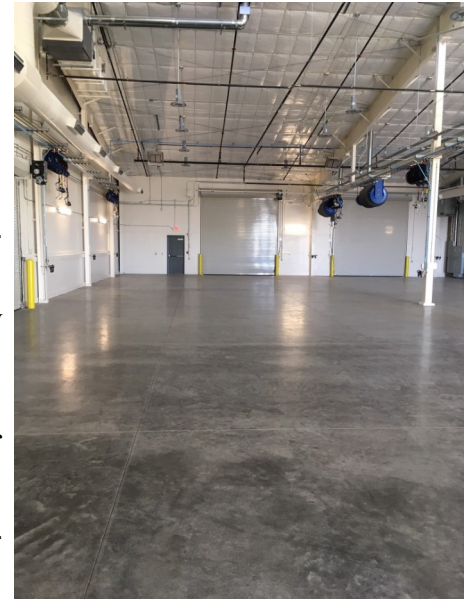


Midland Hosts Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony for Maintenance Facility Expansion

“On April 25, Midland Odessa Urban Transit District (MOUSD) hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its maintenance facility expansion. The construction of two new bays provides the maintenance team with much-needed additional space and better lighting while performing preventative maintenance and repairs. The \$2.7 million project, which took 13 months to complete, was made possible by TDCs provided by

TxDOT and grant funds.

Huitt-Zollars was the architectural firm and Mid-Tex of Midland managed the construction that more than doubles the capacity of the maintenance facility, increasing the number of bays from one to three. The expansion features a pit for performing oil changes and an industrial central fan for improved ventilation.”



Texas Southmost College and Brownsville Metro are continuing to offer free transit services for STC students. (photo STC)

TSC Expands Free Transit Service

By: [VBR Positive Valley News](#)

After a successful pilot program in the spring providing free transit service to all Texas Southmost College students, TSC has expanded the free service citywide via Brownsville Metro to its students.

The free citywide transit service for TSC students began Aug. 26 with the start of the college's fall 2019 semester. It will continue through Aug. 2020. The program is a partnership between TSC, Brownsville Metro and the City of Brownsville.

“We are excited to continue our collaboration with Brownsville Metro and the City of Brownsville to provide the free transit service to our TSC students,” said Adela G. Garza, TSC Board of Trustees chairwoman. “We understand that something like transportation can be an obstacle for a student continuing their education. We’re happy to be expanding the free service citywide so that we can remove that barrier and our students may have the opportunity to continue their pursuit of a higher education.”

TSC students can use all fixed-route services free of charge by providing a valid TSC student identification card. The service will end on Aug. 28, 2020.

DART Breaks Ground on Silver Line

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) and local dignitaries broke ground during six ceremonies on Thursday, September 19, on the new 26-mile Silver Line regional rail service from Plano to DFW International Airport.



DART and local dignitaries break ground for the Silver Line on the spot of the future University of Texas at Dallas Station in Richardson. (DART)

Events took place across DART's historic Cotton Belt corridor in five cities with elected officials from Addison, Plano, Dallas, Carrollton and Richardson, ending at DFW International Airport where additional representatives from the cities of Coppell and Fort Worth celebrated the upcoming service.

Opening in December 2022, the \$1.1 billion project will provide passenger rail connections and service that will improve mobility, accessibility and system linkages to major employment, population and activity centers in the northern part of the DART Service Area. The Silver Line will traverse a total of seven cities: Grapevine, Coppell, Dallas, Carrollton, Addison, Richardson and Plano.

The Silver Line service will include 10 stations across the alignment, providing new transit opportunities for North Texas residents and delivering greater capacity and connectivity, spurring economic development, and supporting workforce development across the region. The stations are DFW Terminal B, DFW North, Cypress Waters, Downtown Carrollton, Addison, Knoll Trail, UT Dallas, City Line, 12th Street and Shiloh Road.

DART's Silver Line will interface with three existing rail lines: The Red/Orange Lines in Richardson/Plano, the Green Line in Carrollton and the Orange Line at DFW International Airport. In addition, at DFW International Airport, the project will connect to the Trinity Metro TEXRail Regional Rail Line to Fort Worth, providing passengers with the opportunity to travel 60 miles across the North Texas region.



Tyler Transit Appreciation Award

Tyler Transit provided transportation services to the City of Tyler Glass Recreation Center Summer Camp 2019. The children benefited from a 10 week fun-

filled summer program which included sports, swimming, arts and crafts, field trips and much more. The Glass Summer Camp is one of the only summer camps

in the region that has field trips to various locations throughout the course of the program thanks to Tyler Transit, Great job!

Citibus Unveils New Electric Buses

Citibus Unveils New Electric Buses in Lubbock, TX – On August 21, 2019. Citibus, in collaboration with the City of Lubbock and Proterra Bus, will hold a press conference to announce the deployment of two electric buses. The event will take place at 10:30 a.m. at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center. The buses will be available on site for participants to see the new technology up-close and will be staged in the Civic Center parking lot just north of the Mahon Public Library. “We are eager to unveil and deploy our new Proterra electric buses for the city of Lubbock to see and experience.” Said Citibus General Manager, Chris Mandrell. “These buses are going to allow Citibus to continue to branch out from the traditional ways of doing things.” The electric buses are powered by clean renewable energy and are 100 percent electric. Each bus emits no tailpipe pollution and provide an opportunity to re-



duce pollution as a whole within the city of Lubbock. “We’re excited to partner with Citibus in bringing clean, quiet electric buses and charging systems to Lubbock,” said Proterra Founder, Dale Hill. “As one of five forward-thinking communities within Texas to adopt Proterra battery electric buses, Lubbock is contributing to a significant transition across the Lone Star State to high performance, zero-emission vehicles.” Citibus purchased these buses using funding from the FTA Low or No-Emission Bus program and plans to apply for additional funding this year to purchase six more electric

buses. Citibus is the public transportation provider for the City of Lubbock. We provide fixed route service, CitiAccess (paratransit system), special services, NiteRide and all on/off campus shuttles for Texas Tech University. We offer daily, weekly and monthly passes at affordable prices. Track your bus in real-time using the DoubleMap app. To learn more about fares, routes, advertising with Citibus or upcoming events and promotions, contact us at 806-712-2000 or check out our website at Citibus.com.



We want to hear from You!

If you would like to share some exciting information, facts, details of an innovative project, or photos, simply submit your article and photos via email to allen@txtransit.org. I look forward to sharing your information.

Allen E. Hunter

VIA's latest Smart Transit Hub to provide frequent service connecting Brooks Area

SAN ANTONIO (Sept. 14, 2019) -- VIA Metropolitan Transit celebrated the Grand Opening and Dedication of its latest Smart Transit Hub on Saturday, September 14. The new Brooks Transit Center opened for service on August 26 with new Primo and Express routes that expand convenient, high-frequency service to one of the fastest-growing communities in the region. The Primo 102 is part of VIA's ongoing investment in more frequent and reliable service and the Better Bus System envisioned in its VIA Reimagined Plan.

"The rapid and dynamic growth happening at Brooks is driving growth in our region, and VIA is proud to be a part of that," VIA President/CEO Jeffrey C. Arndt said. "The new Brooks Transit Center will provide convenient smart transit options and comfortable amenities for riders in the area, and the connections it provides to local bus routes, Express Service, and the new Primo on Military Drive will promote even more development at Brooks."

The community celebration included a dedication of the facility and the new art-in-transit installation by San Antonio artist Diana Kersey, and it marked the official partnership announcement between VIA and IKE Smart City kiosks. The program included a ceremonial ribbon cutting and release of more than 200 butterflies, inspired by Brooks Greenline Park and representing the ongoing transformation of the Brooks area and VIA.

"Transportation is a priority for us as we continue to attract new businesses and residents to the area," said Leo Gomez, Brooks President/CEO. "The new VIA Brooks Transit Center establishes a transportation hub for the Southside, improving connectivity to and from our campus for all of our San Antonio community."

Primo 102 connects the Kel-Lac Transit Center along Military Drive to the new VIA Brooks Transit Center, a Smart Transit Hub with real-time, next-bus information, digital planning kiosks, ticket vending machines, free Wi-Fi, a full-service information center, free parking, electric-car charging stations, solar panels, environmentally-friendly landscaping, phone-charging ports, an IKE Smart City kiosk, public art, and much more.

The project team for the 4,300 sq. ft. Brooks Transit Center includes architects KAI Texas; general contractor Vertex Corporation; and civil engineers Civil Engineering Consultants. The Small Business Enterprise (SBE) goal for this project was exceeded.



Cutting the ribbon at the Grand Opening and Dedication of the VIA Brooks Transit Center are (l. to r.) Bexar County Commissioners Court Judge Nelson Wolff, VIA Board of Trustees Chair Rey Saldaña, San Antonio City Councilmember for District 3 Rebecca Viagran, VIA President/CEO Jeffrey C. Arndt, Brooks Board Chair Steve Goldberg, and Brooks Board Director Anita Uribe Martin.

The Pain of the RFP Process and Why GSA is Easier and Efficient

It is a requirement by the federal government that companies must submit an RFP to ensure transparency in any procurement process using federal funds to pay for the project. Each [Federal Transit Administration \(FTA\)](#) region has its review process and its unique rules and requirements. From both the supplier's and the buyer's perspective, there are multiple pain points. Some of these include:



- 1. Time-consuming processes:** Before you write and administer an RFP, a significant amount of preparation must take place. It may be necessary to complete a Request for Information (RFI) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process before developing an RFP. This will consume a lot of time before you come up with the final RFP.
- 2. Poor communication:** The RFP process is not a one-person-show. You'll have to deal with the requester's needs, suppliers' offers, and stakeholders' interests. In the process of dealing with all these people, the problem of communication will inevitably arise. The individuals requesting may end up making unclear and unspecific demands, the stakeholders may be slow in giving their views, and the suppliers may give vague responses. All of these factors will lead to stress and chaos in the organization.
- 3. Choosing the right supplier:** When choosing the right supplier, select one with the best offer and delivers supplies on time and with a proven track record. Ask for multiple reference cases including those that similar in size to your agency. Stakeholders often prefer certain suppliers and it is difficult to convince them that a well-structured RFP process will bring value for the company.

GSA is Another Option

General Services Administration (GSA) is the centralized authority that provides support for product and service procurement through GSA contract. The entities that are eligible for GSA include cities, counties, state agency, federal agencies and transit agencies—virtually any agency that requires FTA approval to expand funds. Such examples of a GSA include: 1) state and local entities - Schedules 70 and 84; 2) monthly and per trip SaaS or lease options; 3) [National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance Contract \(NCPA\)](#); 4) government contractors that can buy on behalf of the executive and federal agencies; 5) mixed ownership government corporations; 6) [Government of the District of Columbia](#); and 7) eligible non-governmental organizations and international organizations

[Ecolane](#) is an industry-leading provider of modern and intelligent, web-based transit scheduling software. The company is on the GSA 70 schedule and already works closely with several transit agencies in the State of Texas.

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Tyler Transit Invest in a Campaign for the Future

Tyler Transit offered students, parents and guardians free transportation during the month of August. Tyler Transit partnered with Tyler ISD, Texas College, Tyler Junior College, and UT Tyler to provide the services. This campaign allowed rider access to the Public Transit system to individuals traveling to schools and other centers of higher learning. There was also support to educate clients on the services available to them year round.



The Texas Transit Association would like to welcome Rich Sampson, the new Executive Director of the South West Transit Association

New Vans hit the street in McLennan County

McLennan County Rural Transit District and Waco Transit System have just received a small order of Ford Transits from Creative Bus Sales to be used for On Demand Service within the Waco Urbanized Area and McLennan County.



Remember to check the TTA's Website Event's tab for access to important dates and more!

<https://txtransit.org/events/>



Texas Transit Association

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TTA's Mission is to support the needs of Texas' public transportation systems through statewide advocacy and education.

The Texas Transit Association (TTA) was organized in 1986. Our members are Texas metropolitan, small urban, and rural transit agencies, as well as private and public entities from across the United States.

TTA's purpose is to educate the people of Texas about issues affecting the public transit industry within the state. Additionally, TTA actively supports public transportation in the State of Texas and works with members of the state legislature in the pursuit of additional resources to support public transportation.

Consider joining today!



Newsletter Sponsorship Opportunities

Sponsoring the TTA newsletter, by purchasing ad space, can be a powerful way to reach decision makers at member agencies across the state. It will also help to increase exposure in a receptive environment (your customers inbox) and can subtly promote your brand whilst gaining goodwill throughout the entire association. TTA newsletters are a particularly useful tool for communicating with customers, building engagement, and directing customers to key content.

Please be aware, there is a limited number of space available so be sure to lock yours in today. There are sponsorship levels available for any budget. You are able to sponsor a single issue or the entire year (6 issues).

For information on pricing or to start your ad please contact:

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