

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

## **TTA Announces the 2020 Award Recipients during the all-member meeting**

Each year TTA awards agencies and individuals for their outstanding accomplishments and efforts in public transportation.

Most of these awards were delivered virtually due to the world wide pandemic. TTA shared a short video clip at the all-member meeting in March, honoring the award recipients. To view the video of the 2020 award recipients select the link below.

[Link to 2020 awards video](#)



Also, TTA is now accepting nominations for the 2021 awards. Nominations may be made by any individual employed by a transit agency, an official of a transit agency, a regular or an associate member of Texas Transit Association, any TxDOT employee who works with the public transportation industry, any elected official or employee of local, city, or county governments. An organization may also self nominate. Not only can you make a nomination in more than one category, it is encouraged.

Categories include Outstanding Metropolitan, Small Urban and Rural Transit Systems along with many other classifications which recognize the outstanding individuals and accomplishments in our industry. Select this [link](#) for a full listing of categories or to make your nomination.

## **Sean Scott of Alamo Regional Transit provides TTA Board Members with a tour of his facility**

Sean Scott of Alamo Regional Transit hosted the TTA Board of Directors Meeting along with the virtual all-member meeting in March at his new facility. Immediately following the meetings, board members had the opportunity to tour the facility. A special thanks to Sean and his staff for their hospitality.



## Items of Interest from TxDOT's Public Transportation Division (TxDOT-PTN)

### Texas Transit Providers Delivered Vital Services Through Winter Storm Uri

Winter storm Uri proved a tough test for frontline workers all around Texas. As they did in previous disasters like Hurricane Harvey, Texas transit providers stepped up to meet the challenge. Going above and beyond once again, transit drivers – and their colleagues who support, dispatch, and manage them – made a real difference, not only for the riders who depend on them, but also for a whole lot of Texans who rarely use transit at all.

When heat and electricity became unavailable to Texas homes and workplaces, transit staff brought buses to Texans in need, providing safe, heated spaces where they could warm up and charge their phones and computers – even when the drivers were contending with the loss of heat, power and/or water at their own homes.

Kudos for above-and-beyond performance are due not only to drivers, whose work requires them to put their lives on the line every day on Texas roadways and in every kind of weather. They are also well deserved by transit maintenance staff, dispatchers, office staff and top administrators. During the freeze, all these professionals worked together to coordinate vital services, including:

- Emergency medical trips
- Patient discharge to rural areas
- Bringing medical staff to work
- Helping other frontline workers get to work
- Helping people in need reach warming shelters
- Monitoring buildings for water leaks and broken pipes
- Coordinating local resources to resolve an urgent medical situation
- Responding to requests for aid from local Emergency Management departments

Read specific Winter Storm Uri kudos and reports from citizens and TxDOT's partners in transit [here](#). This web page will remain online through June 30, 2021.

### Public Transportation Advisory Committee Meeting to be Conducted Virtually on April 22

Meeting Begins 10am.

[Link to join](#)

(no password needed)

### Texas Transportation Commission Actions

#### January 2021 – Rural Areas Program funds

These awards reflect the second allocation of FTA Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program funds to rural transit districts based on the CARES Act to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

#### February 2021 – Rural Areas Program funds

These awards reflect the allocation of FTA Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program funds to intercity bus carriers based on responses to the Intercity Bus Supplemental Call for Projects for Emergency Relief Funding.

# EL METRO ENFORCES FEDERAL FACE MASK ORDER

Similar to most other cities around the nation during these challenging times, Public Transportation services provided by El Metro and El Lift continue to be a lifeline for the transit-dependent population in the City Of Laredo. The pandemic put a spotlight on the importance of local and rural transit systems in keeping communities working, moving, responding, and connecting with their work, study, medical or leisure destinations. It is during these unprecedented times that El Metro remains vigilant of all safety protocols to further protect our community. Transportation to and from the City of Laredo COVID-19 Vaccine sites for Elderly and Disabled passengers can be provided by calling our El Lift offices at 956-795-2280 to register and to schedule transportation free of charge as approved by City Council.

El Metro has held firm on all City of Laredo Orders and CDC recommendations by consistently requiring riders to wear a face covering when riding Buses and El Lift Vans and or while awaiting their time to board the bus at the Transit Center. The CDC's new issued order late on January 29, 2021, requiring the public to wear face-masks while riding public transportation has now placed a more affirmative tone nationwide. This order also is more defined more thoroughly that a mask should cover nose and mouth and excluded wearing face shields only.

Effective at 11:59 p.m. on February 1st, CDC mask order went into effect and El Metro has adopted this new order to further provide to the local transit-dependent population reliable and safe transportation to their destination. El Metro supports and enforces current orders to prevent the spread of the novel virus and will continue to enforce the new CDC guidance requiring facemasks on public transportation. Providing safe transportation is El Metro and El Lift's overriding priority.

## **El Metro and El Lift Operators will now:**

- Continue to require for all passengers to properly wear a face covering.
- Instruct persons that Federal Law requires wearing a mask on transit vehicles.
- Monitor passengers during the duration of the trip.

## **Transit Center personal will:**

- Continue to require for all visitors to properly wear a face mask
- Instruct persons that federal law requires wearing a mask on transit vehicles and bus boarding areas in the Transit Center.
- Monitor persons on the premises of El Metro facilities and vehicles

During these unprecedented times El Metro's administration reminds the community of our reduced fare programs, reduced off-peak fare for elderly and disabled individuals, and the most recent Multi-Ride Bus Passes where riders can enjoy unlimited rides for a day by purchasing a \$6.00 Daily Pass; concurrently weekly and monthly passes are offered at the Transit Center located at 1301 Farragut Street. El Metro has not stopped providing neither regular nor El Lift services during the ongoing pandemic and for that "We appreciate and thank every El Metro employee that unselfishness reports to work to provide needed transportation for other essential workers and the city's transit dependent population" said Claudia San Miguel, El Metro's General Manager.





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## *Sun Metro provides free rides to COVID Vaccination Sites*



People without a means of transportation to vaccine appointments in El Paso, TX now have access to free rides via Sun Metro transit services.

Sun Metro is helping to reduce the spread of the virus by waiving fares to increase access to the vaccine for the transit-dependent population – which includes people with disabilities, seniors and those who don't have access to a personal vehicle. The free service began March 8 and has been a great success, taking citizens to City and County

vaccination sites especially our elderly and other populations who are the most vulnerable to the Corona-virus.

In the past Sun Metro has offered free rides to other initiatives, such as free rides to polling stations increasing the number of votes. Free rides to COVID vaccination sites is yet another way Sun Metro is helping citizens in lower socioeconomic classes, who are among the most reliant on public transit.



## *McLennan County Rural Transit District using some new cleaning tools to mitigate COVID.*



# Member Spotlight

# REI® >>>>>>



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U.S.-based REI® focuses on solution-based surveillance/safety, fleet management and infotainment products and services to help customers grow and protect their businesses.

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“REI Surveillance Systems have been very good with great reliability in Sun Metro Buses for years. We are excited to have the best technology now, and also working with REI to easily upgrade our older systems to the newest functionality. We look forward to continued partnering with REI for growing and maintaining bus safety in our fleet.”

Danny Meza  
Fleet Maintenance Chief  
Sun Metro  
El Paso, Texas

## Meet Gretchen Hall

Transit Territory Manager

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## METRO Delivers 1000 Meals in Winter Storm Relief Effort



More than two dozen METROLift operators fanned out across the region and helped deliver 1000 meals and grocery supply packages to people with disabilities impacted by the recent winter storm. Dozens of volunteers packed and loaded the supplies on Saturday, Feb. 27, 2021 at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center.

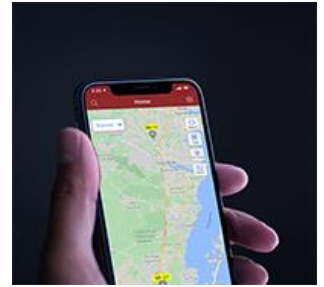
The relief effort organized by the [Asian Chamber of Commerce](#) and the city of Houston was made possible by donations from local business owners through the chamber. Mayor Sylvester Turner and others thanked METRO for its continued assistance during crisis relief efforts. ([Click Here or image below to watch a video about the event.](#))



# The Texas Transit Association welcomes Fortress Mobile as a new Associate Member

Fortress Systems International, Inc., dba: Fortress Mobile is a licensed North Carolina corporation headquartered in Charlotte since 1991. Fortress Mobile is a leading provider of surveillance & fleet management solutions. Fortress Mobile has a strong history of working with Fortune 500 companies, small entrepreneurs, educational institutions, and local and state government agencies.

***We are here to help you!***



**Our System Solution:** Designed as an ALL-IN-ONE solution platform that can provide customers with:

- HD Camera Surveillance
- Safety Management
- Driver Monitoring
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- Vehicle Auto-Maintenance & Diagnostics
- Remote Configuration
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- Digital Driver Vehicle Inspection Report (DVIR)
- Wi-Fi/Cellular Downloads
- SureBUS Cloud Storage Platform



**Our clients include:** Wells Fargo Bank, Facebook, Mecklenburg Transportation Services, Rhode Island Public Transportation Authority, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, San Francisco International Airport, and hundreds of systems throughout the country.

What our clients say about us:

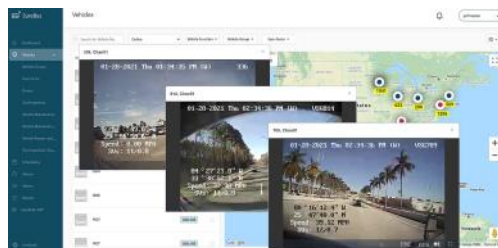
**"It has proven to be a very useful system for us. Not only the live version, but with the ability in tracking the playback to show where we have been. It's a great system!" - Director of Transportation, State Transit Authority**

**"The ability to remotely access video and audit for safety compliance and insurance standards has been a great benefit." - Anthony Dupree, Design & Deployment Engineer, Park 'N Fly**

**"This system has given our employees peace of mind. They don't feel like they are alone, with no help." - Masie Jones, Social Service Manager, Mecklenburg Transportation System**

**"This system has helped with the accountability of our employees, as well as giving our customers status updates in real-time." - Transport Supervisor, GAMS**

[www.FortressMobile.com](http://www.FortressMobile.com)





## CCRTA Celebrates Bus Operators and Staff on Transit Driver Appreciation Day (TDAD)

The Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA) recognizes all Bus Operators and support staff today, March 18th, in honor of Transit Driver Appreciation Day (TDAD).

"The Board of Directors and CCRTA leadership are grateful to all Bus Operators and employees for the dedication they've shown in providing essential transportation during this pandemic," said Jorge G. Cruz-Aedo, CCRTA Chief Executive Officer.



Community members and bus riders can participate in TDAD by telling their Bus Operator "thank you" or by sharing feedback or stories of their favorite Bus Operator at [ccrta.org/tdad](http://ccrta.org/tdad). CCRTA is one of many national public transportation organizations celebrating TDAD, which is an annual event that began in 2009 and is celebrated every March 18th.

For more than 35 years, CCRTA has provided public transportation to the Coastal Bend community.



## Here's an ADA Tip from Jess Segovia, your ADA Guru

**Question:** "A paratransit rider wants our service to park in the driveway of a medical facility for pick-up and drop-off; however, our vans are often blocked in by others parked in the driveway. Do we need to comply with their request?"



**Answer:** The ADA requires operators to service destinations that have public access. This includes private property as long as it is safe to do so and no laws are being violated. Parking in an area that is blocked in by other vehicles, causing service delays, is not considered reasonable. This request may be denied under the right circumstances.

### IS YOUR AGENCY COMPLIANT?



Jess Segovia, your ADA Guru, is offering the following courses in April to assist transit professionals of all levels and responsibilities in understanding how to provide high quality, compliant accessible public transit services.

April 6 & 8, 2021:	ADA Compliance Requirements for Public Transportation Services
April 13 & 15, 2021:	ADA Paratransit Eligibility Determination Webinar
April 14, 2021:	Bus Stop Accessibility Requirements Webinar
April 20, 2021:	Enhancing Your Community's Mobility Management Webinar
April 21, 2021:	Creating Effective Operating Policies, Procedures & Documentation Strategies Webinar

[For more information, pricing and registration](#)

[Jess Segovia](#)—ADA Guru

Jess has spent his career assisting agencies throughout the country in the delivery of safe, high quality and compliant accessible transportation services.

## VIA Metropolitan Transit is a partner in local recovery and relief efforts

### Connecting Their Community, Before, During and After the Storm

When a devastating winter storm brought extreme weather to the San Antonio area in February, many were left without access to sufficient food, water, or power for days. VIA Metropolitan Transit teams mobilized to support local emergency operations and continue to serve recovery and relief efforts following Winter Storm Uri.

The historic storm kept area roadways covered in snow and ice and forced widespread road closures and detours due to unsafe travel conditions. Schools, stores, restaurants, and most other public spaces also closed, and residents were urged to stay home until conditions improved.

The effects of the storm were so severe that for the first time in VIA's history, all regular bus and van service was suspended for several days.

But even as daily service was sidelined by the storm, VIA teams kept moving to support local response and recovery efforts with emergency transports and deliveries. VIA's frontline workers and support staff connected people to area shelters and warming centers, dialysis and other urgent medical appointments, delivered food and supplies to homebound seniors, and offered helping hands for supply and distribution events.

As in past crises, including hurricane evacuations, fuel shortages, and extreme weather events, VIA's coordination with the City of San Antonio's Emergency Operations Center and local partners allowed them to safely support life-saving efforts.

### Winter Storm Uri

- VIA's Response and Recovery Efforts
- Conducted 210 emergency transports to connect at-risk individuals to warming centers and dialysis centers, in coordination with the City of San Antonio Emergency Operations Center.
- Delivered more than 6,800 meals to homebound individuals through their partnership with the San Antonio Food Bank.
- Performed more than 55 community service hours in the week following the storm, to gather, sort and distribute emergency supplies, including food, water, diapers and other essentials, through their VIA Cares volunteer program. Via continues to support local relief efforts through partnerships with the San Antonio Food Bank, San Antonio Diaper Bank, and other local organizations.
- Assisted 10,958 customers through their Customer Care line and call centers.
- Made more than 1,340 calls to VIAtrans customers to notify them of the service disruption and assist in rescheduling their essential trips.
- Offered Fare Free Weekend, February 20-21.



*VIA team member Mike Dominguez joined VIA Cares volunteers at the San Antonio Food Bank in the days after the winter storm that devastated Texas. VIA employees helped sort, package, and deliver food and supplies to neighbors in need.*



# TECHNOLOGY TO BRING RIDERS BACK SAFELY

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## SUPPORTING TODAY'S COVID-19 SAFETY NEEDS

### PASSENGER COMMUNICATION

Sharing information about safe rides using on-board Infotainment

### COVID TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT

Track Vehicle Inspection Cleaning & Verify Inspections

### MONITORING

Video Surveillance systems up to 16 camera views in up to 4k quality

### WIRELESS DOWNLOADING & LIVE STREAMING

Video downloading, live streaming & system health checks to ensure physical distancing

\*IHS Technology Group Research, 2017)



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## DENTON COUNTY COLLABORATES WITH DCTA, SPAN FOR BUS TRANSPORTATION TO VACCINATION CLINICS

In a collaborative effort with Denton County, the Denton County Transportation Authority (DCTA) and Span Inc. of Denton County are working jointly to provide bus transportation to Denton County Public Health (DCPH) vaccination clinics starting Friday, February 26. The complimentary service is only available to those who have a scheduled vaccination appointment at TMS. "We are so appreciative of our local transportation partners who jumped at the opportunity to provide transportation to our residents who need assistance in arriving at Texas Motor Speedway," said Denton County Judge Andy Eads. "This effort is part of our mission to ensure everyone across all four corners of the county has access to transportation in order to receive a COVID-19 vaccine."



Anyone who has received an appointment notification for a COVID-19 vaccine after registering with the DCPH Vaccine Interest Portal is eligible to use bus transportation to a clinic on the appointed day.

Individuals should call DCTA Customer Service at 940-243-0077 as soon as they receive a text, email or phone notification of their vaccination appointment. Shuttle trips must be coordinated and booked with DCTA no later than 2 p.m. the day before your vaccination appointment. Passengers will be able to ride a bus nearest to their appointment time at 8 a.m., 10 a.m., noon or 2 p.m. at two locations – the DCTA Downtown Denton Transit Center, 604 E. Hickory St., in Denton or the Hebron station, 952 Lakeside Circle in Lewisville. DCTA will do its best to accommodate trips for Denton County residents as capacity allows.

"As the COVID-19 vaccine becomes available to more people, DCTA is dedicated to ensuring that transportation is not a hindrance in getting vaccinated," Raymond Suarez, DCTA CEO said. "Offering this service aligns with our commitment to help keep our communities safe and provide mobility options for those who need it."

All shuttle passengers must be registered and have an appointment for the TMS Vaccination clinic and have proof of appointment (QR code, text or email) ready to show the DCTA shuttle operator. The bus will only be going to Texas Motor Speedway. If an individual does not have an appointment, a vaccination will not be provided.

All DCTA established COVID-19 safety protocols will be enforced during these trips. Passengers must comply with the federal mask mandate and social distance at least six feet apart. All DCTA vehicles are cleaned daily with a medical-grade disinfectant and the agency has hand sanitizer stations on bus vehicles for riders to practice hand hygiene.

DCTA will also coordinate with Span Inc. to provide transportation to anyone with special needs or without access to transportation to one of the two DCTA locations. The buses will go through a mass transit lane at Texas Motor Speedway for quick access to provide vaccines to all occupants in a timely manner.

## CapMetro Brings On-Demand Service to Pflugerville with Pickup

Capital Metro will launch a new Pickup Zone in Pflugerville beginning March 23, bringing on-demand public transportation to the City. The service takes customers to and from anywhere within the local service zone. Customers can request a ride directly from the smartphone app or by calling the Pickup Service Center at 512-369-6200.

“We are thrilled to bring Pickup to Pflugerville,” said Chad Ballentine, Capital Metro’s vice president of demand response and innovative mobility. “The service will provide reliable, accessible and on-demand transit to the community. Pickup is an innovative way to build connections and bridge gaps that naturally occur in any transit network.”



Service in the Pflugerville Pickup zone will be available weekdays between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. The handicap accessible service will pick customers up from their location within 15 minutes or less. Pickup service can help customers in Pflugerville get to important locations, such as shopping centers, medical services, City Hall, the Library, local parks and downtown Pflugerville.

“It’s time to try pickup in Pflugerville,” Mayor Victor Gonzales said. “This one-year pilot project supports the goals of Pflugerville’s Transit Development Plan while providing residents a safe, reliable and efficient transportation option. With the convenience of on-demand transit, I hope that residents can use this to get to work, appointments or connect to the Tech Ridge bus system to access additional routes across the region. I’m excited that it’s now time to give Pickup a try. Give it a ride.”

Customers can download the app from their phone's app store (iOS and Android) by searching for "Capital Metro Pickup," register for an account and book a trip. Those in the service zones without access to the smartphone app may call 512-369-6200. A one-way ride costs \$1.25 - the same charge as a Single Ride pass used to take MetroBus and MetroRapid services. A Capital Metro Day Pass, 7-Day Pass or 31-Day Pass will cover a Pickup ride as well. Kids ages 18 and younger ride free. Children 10 years and younger must be accompanied by an adult.

Capital Metro piloted the Pickup service in 2017 and 2018 in Northeast Austin, including the Mueller and Windsor Park neighborhoods. In June 2019, the agency launched service in Manor after which additional zones in Austin and Leander were added. The Pickup service app was developed in partnership with Via which operates on-demand ridesharing networks in New York City, Chicago and Washington, D.C. The company licenses its technology to transportation providers globally, including neighboring cities of Arlington and Fort Worth.





## Texas Transit Association

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<https://txtransit.org/>

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

## Post Jobs and RFPs on TTA's website at no cost!

As an added value to your membership you have the opportunity to post Job positions and Request for Proposals on TTA's website at no additional cost. Though postings can usually be accomplished on the same day, we request at least 48 hours notice.

If you are interested in posting a job position or an RFP, simply email the information to [info@txtransit.org](mailto:info@txtransit.org). If you have questions feel free to reach out to me directly at anytime.

[Allen E. Hunter](#)  
Executive Director  
254-405-4212 cell

## Newsletter Sponsorship Opportunities

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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.

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

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