

MTA awarded \$3 million federal clean fuels grant

Funds will be used for zero emissions electric buses, charging station

The Nashville MTA successfully applied for and received a federal Clean Fuels grant that resulted in a \$3 million award for the purchase of new zero emissions electric buses and an electric charging station at Riverfront Station.

The nation's top transit official, Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff, traveled to Nashville in September to make the announcement. He was joined by Nashville Mayor Karl Dean, TDOT Commissioner John Schroer, MTA Board Chair Thomas F. "Freddie" O'Connell, MTA CEO Paul J. Ballard and other local officials at an FTA news conference.

This grant will provide funding for MTA to begin switching the Music City Circuit buses over to all electric vehicles.

"As more and more Americans choose to ride the bus to work in Nashville and elsewhere, it's good to know that they



FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff traveled to Nashville in September to make the \$3 million grant announcement.

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From the CEO

A new year is upon us, and we've had another year of excellent accomplishments. As we reflect on 2012, we should all be extremely proud of our transit systems' achievements. Listed below are some of them:

- Jointly recorded more than 10 million passenger trips (MTA & RTA) in a fiscal year for the first time in modern history;
- Received a \$3 million clean fuels grant for the purchase of new zero emissions electric buses for the Music City Circuit and an electric charging station at Riverfront Station;
- Began operating a new University Connector route that connects six universities and 10 bus routes;



Paul J. Ballard

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MTA, RTA record more than 10 million passenger trips

For the first time in modern history, the Nashville MTA and Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA) jointly recorded more than 10 million passenger trips in a fiscal year. This milestone is nearly a 14 percent increase over the previous fiscal period and almost 1.3 million more trips than the previous year.

Ridership has increased steadily over the past year and continues to grow. Average Nashville MTA ridership is 31,000 passenger trips per weekday. Average regional bus ridership is 1,200 passenger trips per weekday.

RTA regional bus and train ridership has been increasing as well. For the fiscal year that ended on June 30, Music City Star ridership was up 14 percent, and ridership on regional buses was up 49 percent.

Country star utilizing public transit locales for videos, photo shoots

Everyone, it seems, is using public transportation these days – including one of country music’s top artists.

In particular, Grammy-award winning entertainer Taylor Swift has been incorporating transit into her photos and music videos. In the last two years, the former Hendersonville resident has utilized MTA transit vehicles and properties to showcase her work.

This past October, Swift used the RTA’s Riverfront Station as a backdrop for a photo shoot.

In October 2011, she used an MTA bus in a video. Approximately three minutes into her video “Ours,” Swift can be seen waiting at a bus stop and then boarding an MTA bus. She rides the bus until exiting at the airport. A link to her video, “Ours” may be found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZ34LlaIk88>.

Swift also did a photo shoot at the Tennessee Central Railway Museum and some of the photos appeared in *Glamour* magazine.



photo by Debbie Wong

Taylor Swift



FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff shares a laugh with MTA CEO Paul J. Ballard and Nashville Mayor Karl Dean following the announcement.

FTA grant

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can depend on vehicles that won’t pollute the neighborhood while also helping us to achieve greater energy independence,” Rogoff said. “By investing in these clean-fuel projects today, we’re helping to ensure that transit service is good for the environment for years to come.”

MTA received a share of \$59.3 million to help purchase and support cleaner, greener buses that reduce harmful emissions and improve fuel economy. The project is one of 27 projects across the country selected to receive funds primarily through the FTA FY2012 Clean Fuels Grant Program.

From the CEO

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- Moved into our new facility on Myatt Drive in Madison;
- Continued efforts toward building Nashville’s first full service Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, East-West Connector, that will transform transit in the region and connect East and West Nashville;
- Partnered with the Metro Nashville Arts Commission, which contracted with two nationally-recognized artists to design six transit shelters and other public art along the new 28th/31st Avenue Connector, and also worked with them to bring the Poetry Society of American’s “Poetry in Motion”™ program to MTA;
- Implemented a successful fare change;
- Raised a record \$20,328 in contributions for the annual Metro Employees Consolidated Charities Campaign (MECCC);

- Partnered with the CMA Music Festival to promote the Music City Circuit to festival attendees;
- Co-sponsored the Adventure Science Center’s Music City Science Transit Adventure Camp;
- Completed a fourth year of managing the Music City Star and other RTA services, with both regional



MTA CEO Paul J. Ballard and Nashville Mayor Karl Dean prepare to board with Transit Adventure Camp participants.

- bus and train ridership increasing significantly;
- Launched new regional bus service to Clarksville in Montgomery County;
- Expanded regional bus service in Rutherford and Sumner counties;
- Created RTA’s first system map for the region;
- Celebrated the sixth anniversary of the Music City Star;
- Completed the first year of an initiative entitled the Quality Assurance Program (QAP) in which employees use our services at least once a month and then file a brief on-line summary of their transit experience to help all of us view our services from the customers’ perspectives.

We have concluded another fantastic year. Thank you for your commitment to our customers and our transit authorities. I look forward to another amazing year.

MTA purchases new bus wash systems for Nestor, Myatt properties

Entire fleet goes through wash for the first time on December 5

Nashville MTA buses are looking even cleaner these days thanks in part to four new drive-through bus wash systems recently purchased from Ross & White Company of Cary, Ill.

All four systems – two at Nestor Street and two at Myatt Drive – have been installed and are operating. The wash systems consist of a bus wash, water stripper, and a water reclamation or recycling system. Additional equipment installed included a high-pressure undercarriage pumping system and high-pressure front and wheel sprays.

“We are always looking for ways to improve our operations and run more efficiently and this environmentally sound investment reflects that,” MTA CEO Paul J. Ballard said.

Previously, the MTA only had one 20-year-old bus wash system to keep its vehicles clean. Now, it has four systems, which are capable of providing high-quality washes to an estimated 200 vehicles in a 24-hour period.

In addition, the systems utilize a reclamation process, which allows any water used to be recycled for the next wash. According to design criteria provided by Ross & White, it takes approximately 484 gallons of water to wash an average 40-foot bus. With the water reclamation system, 84.5 percent of that water, or 409 gallons, can be recycled creating a potentially significant costs savings, as well as having a greater positive impact on our environment.



Bus enters new wash bay at Nestor facility.



Check out the view from the driver's seat.



Clean bus emerges.

Kudos...

The riders of 86X are VERY VERY HAPPY and so grateful that you guys listened to us and backed up the schedule for the new express bus to a 5:52 a.m. departure time from Smyrna. It gets us downtown on time now, and the bus (the really long one) was full this morning. It is so great to have a TRUE express bus and have it get downtown in time where we can ride it. THANK YOU SO MUCH! We are grateful for the 96X as well; it is a fantastic alternative (plus soft seats) in the event some of us are running a bit late. Alternatives that allow us to use mass transit ... it doesn't get any better! SO HAPPY!

Elisa Taylor

I want to say a big "THANK YOU" for changing the morning schedule of route 86X. It was great to arrive downtown in time to be at work prior to my scheduled begin time. Thank you again for the time change.

Steve Jenks

I just wanted to let you know how pleased I am that you have updated the scheduling/time of the 86X route to approximately 15 minutes earlier than its previous time. This allows me to ride the 86X in to work instead of the 96X which was previously crowded. I now arrive at work at an acceptable time and the bus is not over-filled. Thank you.

Kathy Stripling

Vick, Burgess receive awards at annual TPTA Conference

Nashville MTA bus operator Chris Vick finished third in the 35-foot bus division in the state championship “rodeo” competition held during the Tennessee Public Transportation Association (TPTA) Annual Conference in Memphis.

Vick was making his second appearance in the state rodeo, having had a very successful local competition. In the local rodeo, the 10-year MTA veteran placed second in all three operator categories. Vick, whose mother also works for MTA, is a Nashville native who has been a bus operator for MTA for 10 years.

Operations Supervisor Gabe Burgess was presented with the Urban Employee of the Year award. He joined the Davidson Transit Organization (DTO) in July 2006 as a bus operator and was quickly promoted to supervisor in August 2006.



Chris Vick



Gabe Burgess

Team Transit participates in Mayor Dean's 5K Run/Walk

For the second straight year, a team of employees participated in the Mayor's Challenge 5K Walk/Run as part of DTO's support of a healthier and happier lifestyle. The event was held Nov. 18 and began at Public Square Park in front of the Metro Courthouse.

Thirty-six DTO employees and 19 of their friends and family members participated in the second annual event.

In partnership with Metro-Nashville Mayor Karl Dean's office, the MTA offered free bus service to customers who were going to the event. Passengers who told their driver they were on their way to or from the Mayor's 5K between noon and 6 p.m. rode for free.



Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and Team Transit wave for the camera before the event.

News & Notes

MTA roдео winners

Three champions were named at the annual Nashville MTA "Rodeo" competition held in September at the MTA facility on Myatt Drive in Madison. Adrell Stringer won the 35-foot and 40-foot bus divisions; Chris Vick was second and Leonard Smith finished third in both categories. In the van category, first place went to Deloris Roberts; Vick placed second, and Jonathan Haralson was third. Stringer, Vick, Roberts and Haralson all competed in the state competition in Memphis in October.



Bus operators Jonathan Haralson, Adrell Stringer, Deloris Roberts and Chris Vick represented MTA in the 2012 TPTA Bus Rodeo in Memphis.

Spring system changes

The Nashville MTA is planning to make its biannual system changes in March with proposed improvements to several MTA routes: 4 Shelby, 15 Murfreesboro Road, 19 Herman, 20 Scott, 28 Meridian, 29 Jefferson, 30 McFerrin, and the Music City Circuit.

In addition, a proposed BRT Lite service for the Murfreesboro Road corridor may begin in late March. This service will be similar to the Route 56 Gallatin Road BRT Lite service. All changes first must be reviewed and approved by the MTA Board of Directors.

Hill wins Silver Stars

Congratulations to DTO employee Dianne Hill who took home the top prize of \$5,000 by winning the Silver Stars competition in late October at the Ryman Auditorium. Silver Stars is a regional talent competition designed as an opportunity for talented seniors to take the stage in Music City and showcase their entertainment abilities while competing for cash prizes.

Be sure to check out her performance at the following link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=fHcdL0EN9RM.

New buses

MTA received 12 new 40-foot Gillig hybrid buses in December, and seven of the new buses are already in service. MTA is due to receive 10 60-foot hybrid articulated buses in the first quarter of 2013.

MTA claims Mayor's Cup with "Stuff the Bus" food drive Collected more than 35,000 pounds of food

The Nashville MTA, Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), and its customers collected 35,755 pounds of food for Second Harvest Food Bank during a "Stuff the Bus" food drive in December, and won the Mayor's Cup in the public participation category for the successful project.

In addition, MTA received a Certificate of Recognition for a 975 percent increase in the amount of food collected over last year's food drive.

Customers brought their canned goods to Music City Central (MCC) and placed them inside a 40-foot bus positioned outside MCC on Charlotte Avenue and in a van located inside MCC on the 4th Avenue level.

The first 1,000 customers who brought in canned goods received a 1-Ride bus ticket. Food donations also were accepted on the Music City Star, and customers also could donate cash online through the food bank's virtual drive website.

The MTA/RTA effort was part of Metro's annual food drive led by

Nashville Mayor Karl Dean's Office. A Metro-wide competition was held to see which department collected the most non-perishable food items. MTA/RTA competed against Metro Parks and the Farmers' Market in the public participation category.



MTA Chief Financial Officer Ed Oliphant (center) accepted the Mayor's Cup for MTA's victory in the public participation portion of the Metro Food Fight benefitting the Second Harvest Food Bank. He is pictured with Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam.

Transit service demand leads MTA, RTA to add new bus routes

Demand for more transit services has been increasing, and to keep up with the demand, new bus routes were added for both the MTA and RTA during the fall 2012 system changes.

The system's fourth connector route – Route 21 University Connector – began operating in late September and provides cross-town service connecting six universities including Tennessee State University, Meharry Medical College, Fisk University, Vanderbilt University, Belmont University and Lipscomb University. Buses travel via the new 28th/31st Avenue Connector every 30 to 60 minutes on weekdays and hourly on weekends. The route provides transfer points to 10 other MTA bus routes.

As part of the effort to serve more Metro Nashville Public Schools as well as provide additional service to the Dickerson Road area, Route 43 Hickory Hills began service October 1 and offers travel between downtown Nashville and Whites Creek High School and also serves Maplewood and Hunters Lane high schools. This route provides service to the Grace Manor assisted living facility in the northern portion of Davidson County.

Additional RTA routes also have begun operating in Sumner and Rutherford Counties. With this additional service, RTA now operates nine express bus routes and the Music City Star regional train.

Service into Murfreesboro and

Rutherford County has been divided among three separate routes. Route 84X Murfreesboro Express provides additional service from MTSU to downtown Nashville, and Route 86X Smyrna/La Vergne Express provides more bus service to that area. Route 96X continues to provide local bus service from Rutherford County.

Sumner County passengers also have more bus service with the addition of the Route 87X Gallatin Express. This route offers separate service to Gallatin.

Additional trips were added and/or times were changed to accommodate riders in Williamson County on Routes 91X Franklin/Brentwood Express and 95X Spring Hill Express.



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If you have suggestions for future articles, please submit them to the MTA communications office.



MTA partners with Arts Commission on new transit shelters

Customers traveling on one of Nashville MTA's newest bus routes also are getting a taste of the arts en route to their destinations.

MTA partnered with the Metro Nashville Arts Commission (MNAC), which contracted six artist-designed transit shelters that have been placed along the Route 21 University Connector near the new 28th/31st Avenue Connector, as well as public art for the bridge itself. MNAC solicited proposals from artists nationwide and completed a selection process involving more than 200 applicants.



The bridge piece "Thread" is constructed with more than 150 steel panels symbolizing quilt squares.

David Dahlquist, a nationally-recognized public artist and teacher from Des Moines, Iowa, was selected to develop the artwork for the bridge and for two of the six transit shelters.

Dahlquist's bridge piece, "Thread", is constructed with more than 150 steel panels symbolizing quilt squares, patterns, threads and knots. The artwork was inspired by quilt squares created during local community workshops at Hadley Park Community Center in 2011. A stainless steel "thread" weaves through the artwork and across the bridge symbolically connecting two formerly separated neighborhoods and cultural areas. The two transit shelters, "Needle", near the 28/31st Avenue Connector approach extend this theme using giant needles to form a gateway to the Connector.

The other four transit shelters, located at the intersection of 28th and Charlotte

Avenues, were completed by artist Kevin Berry from Phoenix, Ariz., who has more than 20 years of experience creating public art.



The shelter "Needle" extends the thread theme by using giant needles to form a gateway to the Connector.

Similar to Dahlquist's artwork, Berry's Magnolia shelters were conceived in the spirit of uniting two unique and diverse communities on each side of the bridge. His design is directly inspired by iconic elements found in both Centennial and Hadley parks. The transit shelter canopy symbolizes the massive roof structure covering the performance pavilion at Hadley Park, and the columns are reminiscent of the fluted columns supporting the roof of the Parthenon at Centennial Park. The shelter's shade screens and cast concrete bench celebrate the beauty of the magnolia trees in the community.



The Magnolia shelters were inspired by iconic elements found in both Centennial and Hadley parks.