

University Connector ridership continues to climb

Record 9,500 passenger trips taken in October

The Route 21 University Connector celebrated the start of its second year of service with nearly 9,500 passenger trips in October. This marked a new record for the route, which began operating on September 30, 2012.

“We are pleased people are utilizing this convenient cross-town service,” MTA Chief Executive Officer Paul J. Ballard said. “Many are using the University Connector to get to the area colleges or simply run errands. We also have seen many young people riding this service to the Green Hills Mall on weekends. Ridership is increasing each month as we had anticipated.”

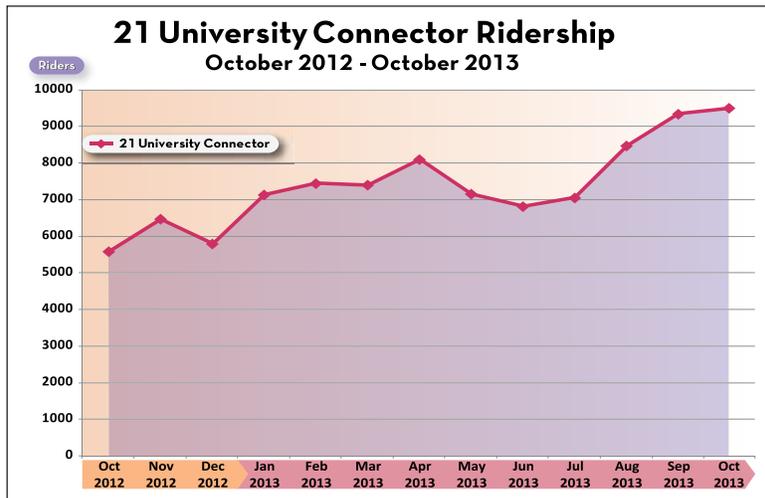
Route 21 University Connector

provides cross-town service connecting six universities: Tennessee State University, Meharry Medical Col-

lege, Fisk University, Vanderbilt University, Belmont University and Lipscomb University. Buses travel via the

28th/31st Avenue Bridge every 30 to 60 minutes on weekdays and hourly on weekends. The route provides transfer points to 10 other MTA bus routes. In partnership with the Metro Arts Commission, six artist-designed transit shelters were commissioned and are placed along the 28th/31st Avenue Bridge.

An average 7,400 passenger trips were taken on this cross-town route each month during its first year of operation. In September and October, ridership averaged more than 9,400 passenger trips monthly. Since service began, nearly 100,000 passenger trips have been recorded on this route.



From the CEO

A new year is almost upon us, and we've had another year of excellent accomplishments. As we reflect on 2013, we should all be extremely proud of our achievements. Some of our highlights:

- Jointly, with RTA, recorded more than 10 million passenger trips in a fiscal year for the second straight year;
- Successfully submitted the Amp Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project application to the Federal Government;
- Received a \$10 million federal TIGER grant for Nashville's Transit Signal Priority System upgrade along our Murfreesboro Pike BRT lite corridor;
- Successfully hosted the Tennessee Public Transportation



Paul J. Ballard

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Veteran scheduler Cannon to retire

If you Google “John Cannon,” the first John Cannon listed is an artist. The second John Cannon named is a banker. And then there's Nashville MTA's John Cannon, who will be retiring at the end of January.

He may not be an artist in the traditional sense, but what he does on a daily basis is an art form. It has been said that he has the entire map of Nashville in his head and can pull out a route faster than any GPS system.

So what does our John Cannon have in common with John Cannon the banker? Consider this: bankers must be trustworthy and provide sound and accurate advice. They always put their customers first. MTA's John Cannon always puts the needs and interests of the passengers first and foremost in any schedule or routing proposal that he develops. He searches for the

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John Cannon

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most expeditious and safest routes possible – not only for the customers, but also for the drivers.

Cannon is a 1984 graduate of the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Science degree in Technology and an Army veteran who served in Germany. He began his transit career as a bus operator in Des Moines, Iowa. It was there that he learned the business from the ground up, eventually becoming vice president of its union local.

He began his tenure in Nashville on January 7, 1985, and has spent his entire MTA career involved with scheduling. His philosophy as a scheduler has always been: you can look at a map and plan a route, but if you don't get behind the wheel and drive the route to understand the community, how can you make the best choices for the customer?

Cannon's challenges have come in many forms throughout his career.

When Music City Central opened in October 2008, the entire system had to be rerouted to make it perform at its peak efficiency. He designed the Gallatin Pike BRT lite service and monthly corridor ridership jumped from 80,000 passenger rides to 120,000 in a short amount of time. He also developed the



John Cannon

schedule for the former Titans' End-Zone Express shuttle service.

In addition, Cannon was the change agent that permitted MTA to have a seat

at the table with Metro departments involved in city event planning. This ensured MTA's ability to provide input concerning the needs of its riders and potential street closures.

Having once been a driver, he has developed a good working relationship with our drivers. His open door policy allowed for the adjusting of service as needed with feedback received from customers through the drivers. It was because of his tenacious desire to provide the best service to our customers that he was affectionately christened "The Oracle." Over the years, he has volunteered his time for events where support staff was needed.

Cannon also is an avid bowler who works hard on his game. Perfection is hard to come by, but he will tell you that he is perfect, having bowled a perfect 300 game. But his biggest accomplishments come as being a driving force in the growth, and success of the Nashville MTA.

From the CEO

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- Association annual conference and rodeo;
- Began BRT lite service along Murfreesboro Pike;
- Expanded airport service to serve the Music City Center convention center and more downtown hotels;
- Started the Adopt-A-Stop program, a new initiative being implemented as a result of MTA receiving a Tennessee Department of Transportation Litter Grant Award;
- Launched an updated MTA website that represents a complete redesign with more user-friendly features;
- Added 10 new New Flyer 60-foot articulated hybrid buses to our fleet;
- Partnered with the Wilson County Fair and the City of Lebanon and its Mayor, Philip Craighead, to successfully operate Music City Star train service to the Wilson

County Fair two Saturdays in August;

- Partnered with the CMA Music Festival to provide the Music City Circuit to festival attendees;
- Added a third round-trip to Clarksville and Montgomery County and also expanded service to Cheatham County with a stop in Pleasant View;
- Took home the "Big Wheel Award" in the 40-foot bus division at the annual TPTA rodeo;



TPTA Executive Director Jason Spain presents the "Big Wheel Award" to MTA's Chris Vick.

- Co-sponsored the Adventure Science Center's Music City Science Transit Adventures Camp;
- Partnered with the Metro Nashville Arts Commission to once again bring the Poetry Society of American's "Poetry in Motion"© program to MTA buses;
- Raised more than \$18,000 in contributions for the annual Metro Employees Consolidated Charities Campaign (MECCC);
- Completed a fifth year of managing the Music City Star and other Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) services, with regional bus ridership continuing to increase significantly; and
- Celebrated the seventh anniversary of the Music City Star.

We have concluded another fantastic year, and I want to thank each of you for your commitment to our customers and our transit authorities. I look forward to another amazing year in 2014.

Amp public design sessions scheduled for January

The Nashville MTA will hold another round of public meetings in mid-January on the Amp as the project begins the final design and engineering phase. The purpose of the meetings is to gather community input on the proposed Nashville bus rapid transit project, which will connect East and West Nashville through downtown.

We will hold four initial public design sessions in January to solicit community input for the project.

Listed below are the locations and times for the meetings:

East Nashville

Monday, January 13, 5:30 p.m., East Park Community Center theater, 600 Woodland St., 37206

Downtown

Tuesday, January 14, 5 p.m., Nashville Downtown Partnership, 150 4th Ave. N., Ste. G-150, 37219

Midtown

Wednesday, January 15, 5:30 p.m., Metropolitan Board of Parks and Recreation, large conference room, 2565 Park Plaza (near Centennial Park), 37203

West Nashville

Thursday, January 16, 5:30 p.m., Montgomery Bell Academy, Paschall Theater, 4100 Harding Road, 37205

The sessions will include a project overview and small group breakout sessions with displays and preliminary plans available for those discussions. The purpose of these sessions is to incorporate the community suggestions that uniquely represent each neighborhood impacted by the Amp.

Each charette will focus on the portion of the route in



Artist's rendition of proposed Amp bus.

which the meeting is held – for instance, the East Nashville session will focus on design details for the East section of the route – but the meetings are open to all Nashville residents.

Other Amp developments include:

- In December, the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board voted to approve \$4 million in funding for the Amp.
- In October, the Nashville MTA Board of Directors approved CDM Smith – an engineering firm with national expertise in designing and building transportation and public transit projects – to complete the final design work.
- In late September, MTA submitted its formal request to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for up to \$75 million in federal transit funds through FTA's Small Starts program for the Amp.
- Also in September, the project received significant support from a broad-based group of business and community leaders – the Amp Coalition.

Nashville MTA receives \$10 million TIGER Grant

The Nashville MTA's federal TIGER grant application resulted in a \$10 million award to MTA for Nashville's Transit Signal Priority System upgrade along the Murfreesboro Pike corridor.

For the second straight year, Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff traveled to Nashville to present a grant to MTA at a news conference. He was joined by Nashville Mayor Karl Dean and MTA/RTA CEO Paul J. Ballard.

"This TIGER grant is a big win for the thousands of riders in Davidson County who depend on the Route 15 bus and the Route 55 bus rapid transit line to get to work, to medical appoint-

ments, to school, and other important destinations in Nashville," Rogoff said. "This project will specifically help the community 'Fix it First' – making much-needed repairs and upgrades to an aging public transit system, making it safe, reliable, and desirable."

The \$13.8 million project includes the installation of upgraded traffic signal equipment and safety enhancements that will improve on-time bus service and provide a more comfortable ride for thousands traveling to downtown Nashville each day. The project also includes upgraded bus shelters, real-time information signs, and new pedestrian crosswalks and sidewalks.



FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff announces major grant for Nashville.

MTA's project is one of 52 transportation projects in 37 states that will receive a total of approximately \$474 million from DOT's Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) 2013 discretionary grant program.



For most teen-agers, independence is achieved the day they obtain their driver's license. The permit symbolizes the freedom to get around town without the need of others for transportation. But for Andrea Dowlan, there is another form of mobility she associates with independence – riding the bus.

"I do have my driving permit, but riding the bus is empowering," said Dowlan, a Martin Luther King Jr. senior recently profiled in an ad of MTA current riders. "I don't have a car, but I also don't have to rely on anyone to get me where I need to go."

Dowlan's independent nature has served her well. She is a member of the MLK debate team and has participated in the Model UN. She is also a member of Youth About Business, a leadership training organization to prepare youth to be successful in business.

"Both my brother and sister were a part of Youth About Business," she said. "I wanted to be a part of it, too, and learn about business and go to work on Wall Street."

Dowlan loves business, and has applied to Emory University where she



Andrea Dowlan

plans on majoring in business. After graduating from business school, she would like to obtain her Doctor of Jurisprudence where she would combine her business background and law degree to work in the field of corporate law.

"I want to work with joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions, and hostile takeovers," she said.

Dowlan has a plan and is always looking ahead. She follows the example set by her mother, who is her role model.

"My mom didn't grow up with a lot, but she made sure that my siblings and I had everything that we needed," she said. "I'm succeeding because of her."

Dowlan is an Oasis Center MTA Youth Action Team Member, who encourages others to ride the bus. This group was formed to share their insight on what they want now and in the future from the MTA. They will hold a citywide MLK Day Young People's Rally to encourage college students to ride the 21 University Connector route to a gathering at Tennessee State University on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

"Riding the bus is inexpensive and reliable. I've learned a lot from my mother, other role models, and my extra-curricular activities. Riding the bus is just smart."

MTA, RTA host annual TPTA Conference, Rodeo Seven DTO employees receive awards during banquet

The Nashville MTA and Regional Transportation Authority of Middle Tennessee (RTA) hosted the Tennessee Public Transportation Association (TPTA) Annual Conference and Rodeo Oct.22-24 at the Music City Center convention center.

The TPTA conference featured the theme – Great Transit Makes Great Communities – and brought together more than 300 public transit managers and employees, state transportation and environmental officials, legislators, city and county government leaders, transit board members and a number of other transit-related businesses. American Public Transportation Association President Michael Melaniphy served as the keynote speaker.

Six Nashville MTA bus operators and mechanics received awards for their

performance in the state championship "rodeo" competition held during the



Team MTA: Felicia Ransom, Troy Willis, Kyle Kruk, Jerome Horton, Chris Vick, Mark Johnson, and Adrell Stringer

TPTA Conference.

Chris Vick, brought home the "Big Wheel Award" for his victory in the 40-foot bus division and Adrell Stringer, was third; Mark Johnson finished

second in the 30-foot bus division; and Jerome Horton took second place in the cutaway van division.

In the inaugural state maintenance rodeo, Kyle Kruk finished first in the van division and Troy Willis was second. In the bus division, Willis took first with Kruk finishing third. Willis also earned a bragging rights medal for being the mechanic who started the van engine the fastest.

MTA also captured the spirit stick for its great support of its MTA rodeo contestants during the state competition.

In addition to the rodeo awards, Lead Foreman Richard Kiefer was recognized for his achievements and presented with an award by his peers at the Annual TPTA Awards Banquet held Oct. 24.

Kiefer was named Urban Transit Employee of the Year. He currently supervises six foremen and ensures all goes as smoothly as possible on each shift.

News & Notes

Belmont Mini MBA

Congratulations to our employees who recently completed Belmont University's Mini MBA program. The program provides participants an overview of subject areas normally found in a business school degree program. It is intended to provide participants with skills and information they need to keep themselves and their organizations competitive.



Dawn Distler, Kym Tucker, Paul J. Ballard (guest at graduation), Marilyn Yokley, Gerry George, Zeda Riggs, Dan Freudberg, Cruscha Coates, and Sonia Lavender (not pictured)

Adopt-A-Stop

Forty-five bus stops throughout Davidson County have been adopted by area businesses and residents as of Nov. 1. The Tennessee Titans organization was the first to adopt a Nashville MTA bus stop under the transit agency's new Adopt-A-Stop program which began in June.

Mayor's 5K

A team of our employees and their friends and family members participated in the Mayor's Challenge 5K Walk/Run as part of our healthier lifestyle initiative.

In partnership with Nashville Mayor Karl Dean's office, the MTA offered free bus service to customers who told their drivers they were on their way to or from the Mayor's 5K.



Mayor Karl Dean and Team Transit from the 5K Challenge

MECCC

MTA raised \$18,368 in contributions for the annual Metro Employees Consolidated Charities Campaign (MECCC) by completing the MTA/DTO pledge cards and participating in other activities.

Music City Central

Traveling to and from Music City Central on an MTA bus became faster and easier with MTA biannual system changes in late September. With 5th Avenue now a two-way street, buses make approximately a half million fewer turns per year and reduce their travel times since they no longer need to circle the block before entering or exiting the downtown transit station.

YPT

MTA Transit Planner Amanda Watson is working with the Nashville/Middle Tennessee chapter of the Young Professionals in Transportation (YPT). YPT provides professional development, fellowship, and networking opportunities for young professionals in the transportation field across the country and around the world. It is based nationally in Washington, D.C. with chapters across the country.

CMO Awards

Communications and Marketing Director Patricia Harris-Morehead was selected as a finalist for the *Nashville Business Journal's* Chief Marketing Officer Awards. Middle Tennessee marketing executives were honored for their outstanding performance in developing and/or leading the marketing strategy for their respective companies or organizations. NBJ personnel collected nominations from the public during a three-month period and an independent panel of judges from the Atlanta chapter of the American Marketing Association selected the finalists and top winners.



Patricia Harris-Morehead

Ridership

For the second straight year, the Nashville MTA and RTA jointly recorded more than 10 million passenger trips in a fiscal year. In fiscal year 2013, which ended on June 30, the MTA provided 9.7 million passenger trips to residents, visitors, students, and tourists within Metro Nashville on its buses and vans. RTA recorded approximately 800,000 passenger trips on its train, buses, and vans. Together, they provided 10.5 million passenger trips in the Middle Tennessee region.



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



NASHVILLE MTA/DTO IS A
DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE

Black Friday ridership up 61 percent on Fareless Friday

The Fareless Friday event held on Black Friday, November 29 was a huge success.

Nearly 31,000 passenger trips were taken on Nashville MTA and RTA buses and vans, which was a 61 percent increase in the ridership compared to last year's day after Thanksgiving ridership. The Music City Star regional train set a new weekday record with more than 1,700 passengers. The routes to and from

the malls had the largest number of riders.

It was the first time three of Middle Tennessee's transit systems (MTA, RTA, and Clarksville Transit) offered the free rides on Black Friday to residents and visitors. The primary objectives of the Fareless Friday promotion were to show appreciation to our loyal customers and attract non-riders to public transit.

Oliphant wins NBJ CFO of the Year in non-profit category

MTA/RTA CFO Ed Oliphant won the *Nashville Business Journal* Chief Financial Officer of the Year Award in the non-profit organization category. This was the fifth annual CFO Awards honoring financial professionals in Middle Tennessee. Out-of-state judges selected 26 finalists in five categories. Oliphant was one of four finalists in his category.

Nominated by Dan Miller of Crosslin & Associates, MTA's CPA firm, Miller stated in his nomination: "I am proud to nominate Ed and feel strongly that his financial leadership at MTA has been critical to its growth and success both internally and

in the community. He is instrumental in transit leadership in Middle Tennessee and is a master at what he does because he believes in our community and the services that MTA and RTA provide. The effort he puts forth to make his agencies the best they can be is truly commendable."

Oliphant is not only the CFO for MTA and RTA but also serves as the treasurer for the pension fund.

He is a volunteer for the Smyrna Sister Cities Student Exchange Program as well as a board member and treasurer for the Nashville Figure Skating Club and group leader for the Children's AWANA program at New Hope Community Church in Brentwood.



Ed Oliphant with CFO of the Year Award

MTA/RTA win Mayor's Cup for third straight year

The Nashville MTA, RTA, and its customers collected 25,146 pounds of food for Second Harvest Food Bank during a "Stuff the Bus" food drive in November, and won the Mayor's Cup in the public participation category for the third straight year.

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 to bring in canned goods received a 1-Ride bus ticket. Food donations also were accepted on the Music

City Star, and customers 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 is the two-time defending Mayor's Cup champion in the public participation category for this successful project. MTA/RTA competed against Metro Parks and the Farmers' Market in the public participation category.