



RTD reached an all-time record number of passenger trips of 97.76 million in February 2008, an increase of 13.1% over the same 12 month period in 2007.

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RTD named Best Transit Agency in North America for 2008

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) has been named the Outstanding Public Transportation System in North America by the American Transportation Association (ATA) for 2008. This is the highest award given by ATA, the country's largest transportation association. The award is based on demonstrated achievement in efficiency and effectiveness in several categories including safety, operations, customer service, financial management, minority and women advancement, marketing, policy and administration and community relations.

RTD won in the large transit agency category, which includes agencies with 30 million or more passenger trips. It is the third time RTD has been named the Outstanding Public Transportation System in North America, having also won the award in 1993 and 2003. ATA will formally present the award to RTD at their Annual Meeting in October.

RTD General Manager Cal Marsella said, "It is an honor for RTD to be recognized by ATA with this prestigious award. I am privileged to work with the high caliber of employees we have at every

level at RTD, and with an outstanding and very dedicated Board of Directors."

RTD Chairman Lee Kemp said, "This award is shared with the residents of the entire 8-county metro area. ATA embodies the excellence we strive for in the transportation industry, and it is gratifying to be recognized yet again."

Congratulations RTD staff and board!

CASTA's Vision for Transit

What does the CASTA membership want transit to look like in Colorado in the future? That was the question that 120 CASTA members, staff from the Colorado Department of Transportation, Carla Perez from Governor Ritter's office, and three Transportation Commissioners wrestled with at the CASTA Visioning Breakfast in May.

Cal Marsella, General Manager of RTD-Denver, kicked off the event with his method for visioning. The vision, Cal said, is from the 100,000 foot perspective, and should define the ultimate

purpose of transit. Once the vision is in place, you then develop the mission -- including an inventory of what is available, a plan and the finances -- and then you define key objectives.

Participants then broke into groups of 10, and started in on the question. After 45 minutes of intense and heart-felt discussion, each table presented two of their top ideas. CASTA staff collected the ideas from each group.

General themes emerged as each table reported their ideas. Participants evoked adjectives such as connected, seamless, superior product, congestion relieving, energy-independent, integrated, inter-modal, statewide, convenient, affordable, user-friendly, efficient, fully accessible, sustainable, reliable and easy-to-use.

As transit managers, the participants quickly moved from the vision to implementation. General themes included:

- A statewide hub-and-spoke transit system based on existing transit agencies
- Connections between common destinations including airports, employment centers, tourist desti-

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From the President, Sherry Ellebracht

Whew! What a fast and furious session at the state Capitol this year. Transportation was the focus of sever-

al pieces of legislation, including tolling along I-70 and repairing structurally deficient bridges. The good news is that transit was an integral component of much of the discussion. Thanks to a strong endorsement from Governor Ritter's Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation Financing and Implementation, discussions about funding transportation also included funding for transit.

As we move into the summer, expect to see continued work by the Blue Ribbon Panel and legislators on bills to be introduced in 2009, with a possible eye on a ballot initiative in November. CASTA will continue to make the case that investing in transit is investing in Colorado's future. It is important for those of us "in the business" to remember that to most politicians, and to the general public, transportation is not an end unto itself, rather, it is the means to access critical destinations—employment, education, recreation, buying goods and services, and maintaining social connections.

Our most powerful advocacy weapon is our ability to align transit with public policy goals already identified by our elected officials and the people they represent. The question for our elected officials is, "Can you support an investment that improves the health of Coloradoans, protects the environment, assists in easing the burden of the rising cost of living, and reduces our dependence on foreign oil?" What could address all that? The answer is transit.

Health – The New England Journal of Medicine reports that people who use

transit spend a median of 19 minutes walking to and from transit, and many achieved the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity a day solely by accessing transit.

Environment – Transit usage saved the United States 37 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions per year. And communities with adequate transit services require fewer land miles and parking spaces.

Wallet – The American Public Transportation Association found that households with access to public transportation can save \$6,251 per year in transportation costs.

Dependence on oil – Public transit in the US saves 1.4 billion gallons of gasoline per year.

In addition, transit provides access and mobility to those who cannot or choose not to drive and allows seniors and people with disabilities to remain engaged in their communities. Urban centers benefit by easing the traffic burden on major roads, and rural communities benefit by providing automobile-free transportation to visitors and residents.

Every transit agency in Colorado plays a critical role in its community; it is our collective job to tell the story to our city council members, our county commissioners, our planning partners and our state legislators. With a governor, house and senate that support transit, a Transportation Commission with several transit advocates, and dedicated supporters at the many levels of government in Colorado, now is the time to work for what transit in Colorado needs.

As we enter fully into the 2008 election cycle, we should listen closely to the
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CASTA Connection is published bimonthly by the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies, 1580 Lincoln Street, Suite 780, Denver, CO 80203. Publication is made possible by a grant from the Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) from the Federal Transit Administration through the Colorado Department of Transportation. Our phone number is 303-839-5197; our FAX number is 303-832-3053. Articles of interest to Colorado transit operators are welcome. Please contact Ann Rajewski at ann@coloradotransit.com to submit your article or advertisement.

Experiencing the Squeeze

Transit agencies have been hit hard by the dramatic rise in both fuel costs and ridership in 2008. How can agencies balance their budgets when faced with the current realities? In July the Utah Transit Authority will institute fuel surcharges of 25 cents a ride and may increase the surcharge if the price of fuel continues to rise substantially. Other agencies around the nation are considering this solution along with increasing advertising revenues, service cuts, delay or cancellation of capital improvements and service increases.

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) published results from their survey on the impact of rising fuel costs on transit services this May. Not surprisingly they found that diesel prices have almost tripled in the last four years which has resulted in agencies having to invest a higher percentage of their operating budget into fuel. Ninety two percent of the responding agencies saw increased ridership over the past three years, while 91% believe increased fuel costs for individuals have contributed to the increased ridership. Unfortunately most agencies have found that despite more ridership and the resulting increased revenue, they are not able to cover the higher fuel costs.

For more than half the responding agencies, 61%, rising fuel costs have changed the way they purchase fuel although there does not seem to be consensus on the best solution. Some have switched to longer contracts while others are taking their chances with the spot market. There are reports that long term contracts are becoming much harder to find and often include cost escalators.

From the President (Continued)

candidates' stances on transportation and, more specifically, transit. This may also be a key time to educate our candidates on the value of transit in the big transportation picture. Have a wonder-

Colorado agencies are no exception to these national trends. Every agency has stories of hard decisions they are making to balance their budgets by the end of the year.

Lisa Streisfeld, CASTA board member and Transportation Planning Manager of the town of Castle Rock, recently reported that Castle Rock local transit saw a 33% increase in ridership in 2008. The number of riders increased by 37% for the month of May alone.

In a June 8, 2008 article from the Daily Camera, an RTD spokesman reported that RTD budgeted for a 27% fuel increase for 2008. They were able to "lock in" a fuel price earlier this year which will result in an actual fuel increase of 55%, putting them about \$6 million over budget for the year. This figure could have been much higher if they had waited until later to lock in their rate.

As RTD faces a large budget overage, they are also working to accommodate increasing ridership by adding trips, especially on long commuter routes that have become standing room only. Providing the extra service during these difficult budgetary times may result in RTD paring back routes that are not as well used. In another budgetary move, RTD decided to implement a fare increase on January 1, 2008, a year earlier than planned. They continue to explore options to raise more funding, including increased advertising and fuel surcharges.

Breckenridge is trying to combat their expected budget overage of 35% by becoming as efficient as possible. During the off season they are running smaller

ful summer and hope to see you at the Fall Conference in September.

buses whenever possible to gain fuel savings. Other resort agencies facing the same sort of budget overages are looking at starting their "season" two weeks after Thanksgiving rather than the week before the holiday.

Durango Transit estimates a \$58,000 budget overage in 2008. They may be able to make up some of that if they start cutting back service despite their increased ridership.

Tell Your Story

There are strong indications that there will a serious effort to pass a bill to increase transportation funding that includes a transit component during the next Colorado legislative session. Help CASTA make the case by emailing us your agency's story. How is your transit agency coping with rising ridership demands and the steep increase in fuel costs? What ridership increases have you seen? What budget deficit do you expect by the end of the year? What tough choices are you making to balance your budget?

Email your stats, stories and comments to Ann at ann@coloradotransit.com.

Did you know?

- CASTA has started listing funding opportunities in the left hand column of the front page of our website. Check it out at www.coloradotransit.com
- Colorado LTAP (Local Technical Assistance Program) offers free traffic count services. Visit their website for more information: http://ltap.colorado.edu/traffic_counts.php

Private Foundations DO Fund Transit

CASTA received a grant for 2008 through CDOT to help smaller agencies with grant writing, in particular writing grants to private foundations. The first portion of this grant was used to sponsor two sessions at the Spring Training Conference. The first session was a panel discussion with representatives from The Caring for Colorado Foundation, The Daniels Fund and the Anschutz Family Foundation. Although none of these foundations mention transit or transportation in their program descriptions they have all funded NECALG's health related transit efforts. This was surprising to many attendees who assumed private foundations do not fund transit. If you are operating under the same assumption it's time to become informed and take advantage of new funding opportunities.

Tips :

- Get to know the foundations that provide funding in your area and what their funding goals are. One great way to get to know local foundations is to attend the Philanthropy Days for your area. Philanthropy Days includes pre-event training that provides attendees with strategies to make the most of the event. During the event attendees meet with five or six different foundations whose staff introduce their funding entity. Representatives from the nonprofits (usually a group of 8 or 10 around the table) are given a short time to present their mission and program focus. Typically a brief discussion gives participating nonprofits a sense of whether their organization should move forward with a proposal. Philanthropy Days take place throughout Colorado. Dates and locations can be found on the Community Resource Center Website at www.crcamerica.org.

- Respect the funder's priorities but think creatively about your services. It's never a good idea to craft a program to fit a funder's goal but many agencies already provide services that are fundable. For example: Do you provide services to an elderly population? Do you provide non-emergent medical transportation? Many foundations fund programs directed towards keeping elderly residents in their homes longer and other health initiatives. If that's the case for funders in your area, think about separating out the rides you provide that help meet the foundation goals and craft your proposal around that "program area."

- Build relationships with foundation staff. Each of the foundation representatives on the panel at CASTA's spring conference encouraged grant seekers to call potential funding sources to discuss their proposal. Use the conversation to make sure that your proposal fits within the guidelines of the foundation's grant process. Often these representatives know and understand the interests of the board members and may help a grant writer with nuances that can make the proposal even stronger. Regardless of whether your program will work for that foundation, ask if they know of any other foundations that may be interested in funding your proposal.

- Keep trying even if your proposal is turned down. You may be breaking new ground by causing decision makers think about their funding priorities in a new way. That shift in direction may take a few tries before they are comfortable with funding it. If you are turned down be sure to call the program manager and

find out why. Make any necessary changes and try again in the next funding cycle.

Are you interested in learning more? If you are still a neophyte grant writer there will be some opportunities later this summer to bring recently written proposals or proposals you are in the process of writing to a work group with a professional grant writer where participants will critique each other and discuss improvements.

For those of you who have mastered the grant writing process and are looking for next steps, plan on attending the "Closing the Deal" session at the fall conference. The session will look at ways to expand your fundraising efforts beyond individual giving and foundation grants.

Join the CASTA Team

CASTA is looking to add another professional to its team! The position of Administrative Assistant will encompass a wide range of administrative support for our office. The individual we seek is a seasoned professional who is energetic, dependable, capable of multi-tasking and prioritizing projects, and understands the importance of contributing to a team in a support role. For more information on this position, as well as other transit related job opportunities, please visit CASTA's employment page at www.coloradotransit/employment.php.

Two heads are better than one!

As of April, the position of CASTA Executive Director is being shared by Elena Wilken and Ann Rajewski. With the birth of her second child, Elena knew that she would be unable to maintain the schedule necessary for running the organization full time. She requested input from the Board of Directors, and was encouraged to seek alternative arrangements that would allow her to continue to work for CASTA and enjoy time with her family.

As luck would have it, Ann Rajewski, CASTA's Director of Communications since April 2006, is expecting her first child in August and expressed interest in an alternative arrangement. With her previous experience in non-profit management, and a working style compatible with Elena's, she is a natural fit for sharing the Executive Director position.

The Board of Directors has approved a plan to be reviewed again in the Fall of 2008. For the summer, you can expect to find Ann in the office Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Elena will be in Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. We are developing communication and documentation strategies so that to the CASTA membership, the position feels seamless.

While both women will know what is going on for all issues, Ann will be the lead on the following: SAFETEA-LU Reauthorization; event contracts, logistics and management;

and employee management. Elena will take the lead on Colorado Transit Coalition, budgeting and annual audit and the RTAP grant administration. Both will share responsibility for: local and state advocacy, developing relationships, speaking engagements, attending conferences and appropriate trainings, board of directors relationships, strategic planning, and conference content. Do not hesitate to ask either director about issues. It is their job to know!

CASTA will be hiring a fourth employee to take over Ann's previous responsibilities this summer.

Both Ann and Elena are committed to the success of the organization and strive to exceed CASTA membership's expectations. Feel free to contact them by phone (303-839-5197) or by email (Elena@coloradotransit.com and Ann@coloradotransit.com) should you have any questions or concerns.

CASTA Accepting Board Applications for 2008-2009

CASTA is accepting letters of application to fill positions on the Board of Directors. Members who are approved by CASTA's Nominating Committee will be placed on the slate for consideration at the CASTA Annual Business meeting scheduled for September 2008 at the CASTA Annual Fall Transit Conference at Copper Mountain.

Serving on the CASTA board is a great way to become more involved with the organization and its members. The board determines policy on many issues and is responsible for the overall operation of the organization. Meetings are held at least four times each year: February, May (at the Spring Training Conference), September (at the Fall Transit Conference) and November. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed, often by conference call.

The CASTA board currently consists of nine members who serve for two-year terms, with the terms staggered so that not all of the directors are elected in the same year. The board is the governing body of the Association and has the authority to take all appropriate measures and perform all duties required to accomplish the objectives of the Association.

Applicants must be employed by a CASTA member agency and may apply in writing by mail to CASTA, 1580 Lincoln Street, #780, Denver, CO 80203 or by email to: Elena@coloradotransit.com no later than Friday, August 22, 2008.

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CASTA's Vision for Transit (Continued)

nations, parks, schools and medical facilities

- TransitQuest (like MapQuest) for transit. Users enter a starting and ending address and find how to make their trip by transit
- A universal transit pass for bus, light rail, train, taxi, and shuttle services throughout the state.

Operations

Many excellent ideas were presented to make the operation of transit more efficient and effective, including:

- More support for and collaboration with the private sector.
- Group or co-op purchasing of fuel, supplies, vehicles, non-rolling stock capital and maintenance
- Better use of existing resources by coordinating services and eliminating redundancy
- Statewide transit planning that identifies and addresses existing gaps.

Land Use

Participants foresaw the need to develop transit-friendly land-use patterns, from business development around intermodal stations to more park-n-rides. Transit managers would like to see the integration of roads, bicycle paths, tran-



sit routes and transit stops for true intermodalism.

Energy

To attain energy independence, participants suggested promoting alternative energy for transit rolling stock and

facilities: wind, hydrogen, natural gas and other alternative fuels. However, most concurred that we gain the greatest reduction simply by promoting transit as an alternative to the single-use automobile.

Next Steps

If you are a CASTA member or other interested stakeholder in the future of transit, log on to the CASTA website at www.coloradotransit.com to see the entire draft report. You can respond and add additional ideas using the email link. CASTA staff will prepare a draft report for the CASTA board this summer. The Board will host an additional listening session at the Fall Transit Conference in September, and a final report will be completed shortly thereafter.

CASTA Unveils a New Networking Resource

CASTA invites you to register for its new online discussion forum! As a registered user, you will be granted access to a wealth of information from individuals who have firsthand knowledge of transit issues. You will be connected to other professionals in the transit industry who may have experience or knowledge of a particular issue your agency is working through. Discussion topics include:

- Advocacy/Public Policy
- Coordination
- Customer Service Issues
- Elderly & Disabled Transportation
- Finances/Fund-Raising/Grants
- Human Resources
- Land Use/Development
- Maintenance/Technology
- Marketing
- Paratransit/ADA
- Policies/Regulations

- Risk Management/Emergency Preparedness

To register, visit our website at www.coloradotransit.com or click here.

Please note that submission of a registration request may take up to 24 hours to process. Once registered, you will receive an email confirmation with your user name and password to access the forum. You may respond to a posted question, or post one for yourself. You may also set your email preferences for specific topics and request email notifications of questions posted about the topics you have selected.

2008 CASTA Fall Conference and EXPO

September 22-26, 2008



Information and registration forms will be available soon!

Transit Steps Up During Emergencies

Through all kinds of weather and other tough situations, public transportation comes through. During the past year, U.S. transit agencies provided critical help and support through a vast range of crises—most of them real, but some drills, helping transit employees prepare for such eventualities.

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District stepped in to help following an April 29 explosion that caused part of a freeway to collapse near the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge. BART responded by operating longer trains and adding more frequent service. The resulting ridership on May 1 was the highest in the system's history: 375,200, 10 percent above the typical weekday average.

In Pittsburgh, the Port Authority of Allegheny County provided a bus on several occasions to local firefighters who needed a place to stay warm while on the scene of a fire in frigid temperatures. In one case, when the temperature was in the low teens, fourth-year operator Eric Kramer stayed two hours beyond his regular shift to keep a warm bus running at the scene of an apartment fire.

The Central New York Regional Transportation Authority in Syracuse did its best to sustain bus operations in February, when some 100 inches of snow fell in the region.

Citilink in Fort Wayne, Ind., provided 6,000 trips during a two-day snow emergency in February. When temperatures rose and air quality declined in the summer, the system was one of several that operated free on ozone alert days.

Transit agencies also coped with extremely high summer temperatures in other ways. Metro in Cincinnati offered free bus rides to and from 20 "cool centers" operating in recreation centers throughout the city, and City Utilities in Springfield, Mo., provided similar free service to three cooling shelters when the Springfield-Green County Health Department issued an excessive heat

warning.

BART saw its daily ridership increase by nearly 6,700 on its first Spare the Air Day on Aug. 29—the largest ridership since the agency began participating in the free transit program in 2004.

Floods and Fires

CityLink in Abilene, Texas, operated buses around the clock to evacuate more than 100 people and five pets when severe flooding struck the area in August. "We probably evacuated somewhere close to six good-sized neighborhoods," said CityLink General Manager Brad Patrick, adding that the evacuees included elderly residents and persons with disabilities.

As wildfires ravaged large areas of southern California in late October, public transportation offered critical assistance with evacuation efforts and helped transport responders to emergency locations. For example, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System used its paratransit mini-buses to evacuate about 100 senior citizens from Rancho Bernardo on Oct. 22; the North County Transit District in Escondido helped with the Oct. 21 evacuation from the Del Mar fairgrounds to Qualcomm Stadium. At the request of the Los Angeles Police Department, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority provided buses in the Porter Ranch area on Oct. 21; and the Orange County Transportation Authority provided buses to transport firefighters and to evacuate about 200 inmates from the James A. Musick Jail in Irvine to the central jail in Santa Ana.

Emergency Drills

Trinity Railway Express, operated by the Fort Worth Transportation Authority and Dallas Area Rapid Transit, conducted its first emergency drill in downtown Fort Worth in June. The worst-case scenario included a passenger train and freight train colliding, which meant fatalities, injuries, and the potential for a chemical spill.

The Toronto Transit Commission conducted a simulated tunnel rescue at its Kelley Subway Yard as part of the 2007 APTA Rail Conference in June. TTC explained that the simulation was part of a major initiative to ensure that all Toronto firefighters participated in a rescue from a train incident under severe theatrical smoke conditions. People watching the drill observed firefighting personnel using the Subway Emergency Rescue Vehicle, infrared imaging cameras, and subway radios under full respiratory protection and access control protocols.

To cope with both natural and man-made disasters, and to continue to meet the needs of its region, in August the GRTC Transit System in Richmond, Va., acquired a "Mobile Command Center" to function as a "home base" in case of emergency. The vehicle has five work stations complete with computer, telephone, and radio capabilities, as well as full Internet access. To maintain efficiency, a generator that uses the same fuel as the engine powers the vehicle.

Reprinted with permission from APTA'S Publication Passenger Transport.

Coaching the Van Driver

CASTA's library now has training materials for the recently updated version of Coaching the Van Driver. Since the train-the-trainer course was offered at the spring conference, there are a few trainers who may be willing to teach the course at your agency. The program is a defensive driving course from the National Safety Council. It teaches drivers to compensate for a van's size, weight and blind spots. They also discuss defensive driving techniques that can help prevent collisions. Contact the CASTA offices for trainers and materials.

Upcoming Events

Context Sensitive Solutions: Designing Transportation Projects for People and Places

July 24-25, 2008

Sponsor: STPP, CNT

Location: Denver, CO

Recruitment and Retention

July 31 - August 7, 2008

Sponsor: The Gates Family Foundation

Location: Breckenridge, CO

Instructor's Course in Paratransit Operator Training

August 4-7, 2008

Sponsor: CASTA

Location: Denver, CO

ADA & Paratransit Workshop

August 17-19, 2008

Sponsor: SWTA

Location: Corpus Christi, TX

Transit Marketing Seminar

September 7-9, 2008

Sponsor: SWTA

Location: Oklahoma City, OK

Grant Writing Workshop

September 11-12, 2008

Sponsor: Denver Regional Council of Governments, Grant Writing USA

Location: Denver, CO

APTA Annual Meeting and EXPO 2008

October 5-8, 2008

Sponsor: APTA

Location: San Diego, CA

NTI Transit Trainers' Workshop 2008

October 19-22, 2008

Sponsor: NTI

Location: Denver, CO

18th National Conference on Rural Public and Intercity Bus Transportation

October 19-22, 2008

Sponsor: TRB, FTA, RTAP, NATP, NDOR

Location: Omaha, NE

Visit www.coloradotransit.com and click on Conferences and Training for more information on these events.

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