

SUMMIT COUNTY: BREAKING GROUND WITH STIMULUS MONEY *Reprinted with permission from The Summit Daily*

With a group of dignitaries on hand to turn ceremonial shovels of dirt, local officials marked the groundbreaking for a new fleet maintenance facility for Summit Stage buses and other county vehicles.

“One of the best ways to work your way out of economic problems is to invest in infrastructure,” said Colorado Department of Transportation director Russ George. The Summit County project is partially funded by about \$10 million of federal money for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Summit County matched the federal funding with about \$4.5.

“The money is getting out there ... And creating jobs” George said. “It’s not some abstract thing,” he added. “This is a

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Congressman Jared Polis, third from left, as well as a handful of Summit officials were on hand during the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Summit County fleet maintenance facility Wednesday. Photo by Mark Fox/Summit Daily.

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SOCIAL MEDIA: HOW CAN YOUR AGENCY UTILIZE THIS VALUABLE TOOL?

Social Media is quickly becoming a communication tool that shouldn't be ignored. With over 90 million Facebook users and 25 million people using Twitter each month, social media may be your new best way to connect with riders and transit activists.

There are already agencies around the nation using social media to effectively communicate with transit riders. The Bay Area Rapid Transit system (BART) in San Francisco has developed an innovative advertising plan that includes a new interactive website, twitter program and facebook page. The strategy is to appeal to a new audience by treating transit as an experience to be savored.

Ads have highlighted unique riders, the various acts that perform at transit stations and the stations themselves. Check it out at www.bart.gov to see how it works or to start formulating ideas for your agency.

BART's new website has the same look and feel as their TV, radio and bus ads. They all focus on highlighting the uniqueness of BART and its riders, each of which have a story. The website has even given their stations unique "stories" and included ridership participation in creating those stories by asking riders to submit photos they have taken at various stops. The photo submissions range from dramatic night scenes to quick

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OFFICERS

President: **Dan Blankenship**
Roaring Fork Transportation Authority
Phone: 970.920.1905 ext. 4981
dblankenship@rfta.com

Vice President: **Ron Andresen**
First Transit, Inc.
Phone: 303.244.1380
rob.andresen@ft.firstgroupamerica.com

Treasurer: **Lenna Kottke**
Special Transit - Boulder
Phone: 303.447.2848 ext. 103
lenna@specialtransit.org

Secretary: **Philo Shelton**
City of Steamboat Springs
Phone: 970.871.8204
pskelton@steamboatsprings.net

Past President: **Sherry Ellebracht**
RTD - Denver
Phone: 303.299.2353
sherry.ellebracht@rtd-denver.com

DIRECTORS

Hank Braaksma
Seniors Resource Center
Phone: 303.917.6692
hbraaksma@srcaging.org

Brad Patterson
Greeley-Evans Transit
Phone: 970.397.8564
brad.patterson@greeleygov.com

Sherry Ritenour
City of Colorado Springs
Phone: 719.385.5429
sritenour@springsgov.com

Harry Taylor
ECO Transit
Phone: 970.328.3521
harry.taylor@eaglecounty.us

PARTICIPANTS

Eric Ellis
CDOT
Phone: 303.757.9766
eric.t.ellis@dot.state.co.us

Elena Wilken
CASTA Executive Director
Phone: 303.839.5197
elenaw@coloradotransit.com

Ann Rajewski
CASTA Executive Director
Phone: 303.839.5197
annr@coloradotransit.com

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FROM THE PRESIDENT THERE'S A NEW GAME IN TOWN

Partnerships - it's the new name of the game and may become a requirement for your agency to stay in the game. Partnerships are modeled by the highest levels of government and umbrella agencies. In fact, the Department of Transportation (DOT), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are developing common goals through a federal intra-agency partnership called the Sustainable Communities Partnership. There are indications that this partnership concept may even seep into the next transportation authorization, so your agency could be far ahead in the game if you have formed working partnerships in your community.

RFTA has participated in, and benefited from, a number of partnerships over the years—most notably with the eight municipalities and three counties in our service area. Developing, nurturing and maintaining these kinds of relationships is not always easy. However, more often than not, the paybacks are well worth the time invested, benefitting the transit agencies and communities involved.

Aside from working with local and regional members, RFTA works in close cooperation with public and private entities providing seasonal services with the U.S. Forest Service, Aspen Skiing Company, and Aspen Music Festival and School, utilizing economies of scale to provide services that support the entire Roaring Fork Valley. Working together capitalizes on organizational expertise and makes use of shared dollars to eliminate spending redundancies for operations, maintenance, facilities, marketing and advertising, purchasing, training – you name it.

Funding opportunities are also enhanced through partnerships. A great example of this is the formation and resulting work of the Colorado Transit Coalition (CTC), which was formed in an effort to streamline funding requests from for the Section

5309 grant funds. The partnership approach has allowed the D.C. delegation to support the CTC request wholeheartedly, regardless of their district or party affiliation. Participating agencies have also benefited individually from the partnership. Working together has ensured that everyone gets a piece of the pie each year without having to pay an arm and a leg for their own lobbyist.

Closer to home, CASTA has partnered with a number of agencies in the Denver-Metro area to work on the reauthorization. Partners include FRESC, Transit Alliance, Colorado Environmental Coalition, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project and New Belgium Brewing Company (this sounds a bit suspect....partnering with a brewing company eh?). Each is a distinct and unique entity with a diverse array of business interests joining together for a mutually beneficial outcome.

How can your agency capitalize on partnerships? Take a look ahead at the opportunities and challenges you may encounter in the coming months and years, and consider forging new relationships and rekindling old ones. Initiate conversations with other transit providers, and then spread your reach to non-transit related agencies. Look for synergies in missions, goals and services; then cut loose and tap into the private sector. After all, who would have thought that a micro brewery in Fort Collins would be game for joining forces on a transportation bill? Be creative, and don't be afraid to ask for support, or the opportunity to assist. Remember that two heads (or three or four) are typically better than one!

Sincerely,
Dan Blankenship
President



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PUTTING COLORADO TO WORK - ARRA TRANSIT PROJECTS AROUND THE STATE

Colorado's transit agencies are working with federal and state partners to obligate the ARRA funding as quickly as is appropriate. Colorado ranks second in the nation for Recovery Act spending transparency thanks to the state website www.colorado.gov/recovery. The ranking was released in a national study, "Show Us the Stimulus," by Good Jobs First, a Washington D.C.-based nonprofit research center.

The report scored state Recovery Act websites according to their ability to show various types of spending information – including contracts awarded, distribution of spending by county or town, and general explanations of funding categories. On a scale of 0 to 100, Colorado scored 68. The average score was 28. Colorado was one of just five states that scored over 50. Maryland topped the list. The report authors are part of a national coalition called States for a Transparent and Accountable Recovery (STAR coalition).

The following are examples of ARRA transit projects from around the state:

Mountain Metro Colorado Springs - Total \$8,789,000

Preventative maintenance, capital cost of contracting, ADA contract operation costs, construct a new contractor facility, bus and van replacement, operating assistance, renovation and upgrades to existing bus terminal and citadel transfer station, security/surveillance cameras for rolling stock

North Front Range - Total \$3,503,000

- *City of Fort Collins \$2,475,000*
Purchase 6 Clean Natural Gas vehicles to replace older model biodiesel vehicles, purchase and install proximity card readers to fleet
- *City of Loveland \$774,000*
Purchase 2 - 35' biodiesel vehicles – one replacement, one expansion, purchase and install electronic fareboxes to all buses
- *Town of Berthoud \$54,000*
Purchase 12-passenger commuter bus
- *North Front Range MPO \$100,000*
Purchase 4 commuter vans to replace 4 currently leased vans for VanGo program

Greeley - Total \$1,953,000

Bus and van replacement, on-board technology upgrades, existing transit facilities upgrades, retrofit bus safety railings on 13 buses, improvements to bus stop signage, access and lighting, GET Bus Fleet Marketing

RTD Denver - Total \$130,692,176

West Corridor light rail (\$40,000,000), Denver Union Station (\$18,600,000), Rolling stock and facility improvements (\$72,092,176)

Information Sources:

- Colorado Department of Transportation www.dot.state.co.us
- Denver Regional Council of Governments www.drcog.org
- Denver Regional Transportation www.rtd-denver.com
State of Colorado www.colorado.gov/recovery
- Federal Transit Administration www.fta.dot.gov

CDOT UPDATE

On October 15th the Transportation Commission graciously loaned the CDOT transit unit \$8.2 million dollars to allow CDOT to move forward with executing operating contracts, in spite of the fact that currently, there is no federal appropriations bill. Please take the time to thank your Commissioner.

A couple of thoughts regarding the 2010 contracts:

- You should be receiving an awards letter from Jennifer Finch shortly. Please be prepared to quickly resolve any scope of work issues with the appropriate CDOT grant managers so contract execution is not unduly delayed.
- Please note that CDOT no longer requires a resolution. With that said, CDOT doesn't know what is required at the local level to execute your contract. Please plan accordingly.

- CDOT strongly encourages your agency to bill the grant monthly (this will be noted in your contractual scope of work). CDOT has DBE reporting requirements and utilizes your paid invoices in calculating contracting opportunities. If payment of invoices are delayed (either by not being submitted timely by your agency or by a lack of proper documentation), it makes the DBE calculation impossible.

- It becomes a challenge for the business office to sort through multiple monthly billings and their associated back-up documentation versus smaller reimbursement requests. Please plan monthly billing accordingly.

Have you taken advantage of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)? It will enable your agency to be paid more quickly than relying on a hard check being mailed. Please contact Elexis Keener of the Business office if you have any questions

or need the appropriate forms. She can be reached at 303-512-4525 or Elexis.keener@dot.state.co.us (fax – 303-512-4524)

The Interim Transit and Rail Division Advisory Committee has met twice and is forging ahead with addressing its legislature (SB 09-094 is actually is a tolerable 6 page document!). The committee meets monthly and it is anticipated that they will need approximately 6 to 8 months to complete their tasks. Diverse interests are well represented throughout its 16 members (which includes CASTA).

Finally, it was such a pleasure to see everyone at the CASTA/CDOT Fall Conference. CDOT appreciates the fact that so many agencies took the time to participate. We want to say thank our partners at CASTA and our host David Peckler and his staff. Excellent job folks! ▪

DURANGO'S NEW INTERMODAL TRANSIT CENTER

By Amber Blake

The City of Durango hosted the Grand Opening of their new Intermodal Transit Center, located at 250 West 8th Street, on Friday, August 14, 2009. The 8,000 square foot, \$4 million building is the largest of its kind in the Southwest and is Durango Transit's new home. The intermodal center will act as a regional hub for public transportation through which Durango Transit, Ignacio Road Runner, Greyhound, and Durango Mountain Resort will be running their services. The facility is in the process of being LEED certified, and includes passenger amenities like restrooms, information counters, a passenger concourse, and covered bike parking for approximately 100 bicycles.

Grand opening ceremonies were kicked off with a multi-modal parade and pedestrian promenade through town. The parade included over 60 participants



riding bicycles, a surrey, high wheelers, electric vehicles and a trolley. Transportation Commissioner Steve Parker was the keynote speaker, followed by remarks from Mayor Pro-Tem Michael Rendon.

The city council members cut the ceremonial ribbon in front of more than 200 people who attended the opening ceremony. ▪

CASTA'S 2009 ANNUAL TRANSIT AWARD RECIPIENTS

CASTA's 2009 Annual Transit Awards Dinner was held in Snowmass Village, CO on September 10, 2009. Russell George, CDOT Executive Director, dazzled dinner guests as the event's keynote speaker.

CASTA is extremely proud to announce its 2009 Award recipients as listed here.



**Medium Transit System of the Year
Greeley-Evans Transit**

Nominated by: Rick Morris, Greeley Citizen Transportation Advisory Board

**Large Transit System of the Year
Roaring Fork Transportation Authority**

Nominated by: Dawn Mullally Chase, RFTA

**Transit Administrator of the Year
Dan Blankenship**

Roaring Fork Transportation Authority

Other Nominees:

- Debbie Corthell, Seniors' Resource Center
- Dave Menter – Mountain Metro Transit
- Brad Patterson – Greeley-Evans Transit
- Peter Tregillus - SUCAP



Dawn Mullally Chase presents Dan Blankenship, RFTA Executive Director, with the Transit Administrator of the Year award.

**Transit Employee of the Year
Tom Russell
City of Greeley**

Other Nominees:

- Kristine Larson, South Central COG
- Ralph Mason, Special Transit

**Open Category Award
US Highway 82 Bus Lanes**

Nominated by: Lynn Rumbaugh, City of Aspen

**Friend of Transit
Houston "Tex" Elam**

Denver Regional Mobility & Access Council

Other Nominees:

- Jacque Whitsitt – Basalt Town Council

**Hard Hat of the Year
John Jones
Summit Stage Transit**

**Captain of the Year
Russell George**

Colorado Department of Transportation

**Lifetime Achievement Award
Clarence "Cal" Marsella
RTD-Denver**



David Peckler, Transit Manager for the Town of Snowmass Village, has the microphone as he and representatives from the Town of Aspen, Snowmass Village and Pitkin County accept the Open Category Award for US Highway 82 Bus Lanes.



Brad Patterson and Tom Russell with Greeley-Evans Transit accept the Medium Transit System of the Year award.

Russell George, CDOT Executive Director, accepts the Captain of the Year award from Rob Andresen and Elena Wilken.



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SOCIAL MEDIA continued from cover...

camera phone photos of someone performing. BART staff reviews all submissions and update their website with station photos regularly.

The new campaign also encourages riders to follow BART via twitter; they currently have over 5,000 followers. BART tweets are often practical, offering riders information on delays, reminders of holiday schedules, parking fees and other updates that impact users. The messages are short but often have a web address for more information. What sets BART apart, and reinforces the ad concept of transit as an experience, are the non-practical side of their tweets. Here's an example of a recent tweet:

"Seen & Heard on BART this week: pan-pipe dancer, Qigong circle, translator of Chilean novels, tussling teletubbies."

This next tweet informs riders about a special shuttle service:

"This looks fun: Geek out series of programs for adults at Lawrence Hall of Science. Shuttle from Berkley BART! "

If BART receives an interesting or complimentary (in a fun, quirky way) tweet from one of their riders, they re-tweet it so everyone can enjoy the message. This type of social marketing can promote a cult-like following amongst BART riders who may spread the interest in transit when they share tweets with friends or family.

Other agencies are taking advantage of text messaging to get their information out to riders. Software to provide a text messaging service for transit riders to access bus/train schedule information via cell phones is now available. This technology is simple to use, reliable and provides the user with the times of the next buses/trains arriving at the designated bus stop/station. Stop ID #'s

are assigned to all stops which the user may send a text to. Within seconds, the user will receive a text message outlining the desired arrival times of the bus/train. This system will also work in 'real time' for systems that have enabled GPS transmitters on the transit equipment. Software can be structured to meet the needs of your particular system – whether it is small, medium, or large in size. In addition, some software systems allow for a customizable message that is included at bottom of each text, which could be sold to local businesses as ad space. So, a rider may learn that his or her bus may have been delayed fifteen minutes while also noting an ad at the bottom of the text that notifies them of a 50 cent discount on a cup of coffee at the cafe across the street. While software packages are now available on the market, a major investment of software isn't required to take advantage of text messaging. Depending on the cell phone service and web support available through your agency's provider, you may have the capability to set up your own text notification system by having your riders sign up to get text messages from a designated employee who would send out a batch message regarding delays or updates related to your system's routes.

While BART may have a larger advertising budget to work with than your agency, having a tighter budget doesn't set social media out of your reach. The beauty of social media is that it could only cost your agency some personnel time. Social media should never replace your other outreach efforts, but it may prove to be an effective communicator to your constituents. Want to explore the possibilities?

- Sign up for Twitter (twitter.com) or Facebook (www.facebook.com) to follow BART or other local organizations for a while to check out how they use the media.

- Is your agency working on a new advertising campaign? Think about incorporating a creative social media aspect to your campaign through Facebook, Twitter or texting to reinforce your message.
- Develop content in advance so you have material to tweet or post weekly for several months. This would limit amount of maintenance your staff would have to devote to your campaign while you measure the success of your endeavor by tracking number of followers or fans and responses.

For additional resources and articles check the CASTA website at www.coloradotransit.com. ▪

LOOKING AHEAD...



**SAVE THE DATE
for
2010 CASTA Conferences!**

Spring Training Conference

May 4-7, 2010

The Curtis

Denver, CO

Fall Transit Conference & EXPO

September 14-17, 2010

Park Hyatt Beaver Creek Resort

Avon, CO

NEW DVDS IN THE CASTA LIBRARY

The Mark is a fast paced training video depicting a fictionalized version of an all-too-real threat against an average metropolitan transit system. It demonstrates to transit employees how asking the right questions and following their instincts when faced with suspicious and unusual circumstances could ultimately mean the difference between life and death. This DVD is produced by the Federal Transit Administration and the National Transit Institute.

Warning Signs is an exhilarating video presentation on the key aspects of system security for transit employees. It will increase the viewer's awareness of what to look for and what to do regarding suspicious activity, packages, devices, and substances. The practices put forth will not only help a transit system "harden the target" relative to terrorism, but will also improve overall security – helping reduce all levels of crime. This DVD is produced by the Federal Transit Administration and the National Transit Institute.

The 10 Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities is a DVD that uses humorous vignettes to deliver its disability awareness message.

UPDATE ON COLORADO COORDINATING COUNCIL GRANTS

By Sylvia Labrucherie

This fall, the Colorado Coordinating Council for Transportation Access and Mobility announced the availability of funds to establish or support local councils for the coordination of human services transportation. The application deadline was October 6, 2009. The State Coordinating Council received 13 applications for technical assistance or implementation funding that totaled nearly \$160,000. With only \$110,000 available, grant reviewers will have a challenge choosing the final recipients.

A four-person, council member review committee are evaluating the applications and will report their recommendations to the full Coordinating Council at the November 12th meeting.

Coordinating Council meetings are held monthly for members of the executive committee members, and quarterly for the full Council of approximately 30 agencies. Meetings are the second Thursday of each month from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and are held at the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, 633 17th Street in downtown Denver. For more information, contact Sylvia Labrucherie at 303-512-4045 or Sylvia.Labrucherie@dot.state.co.us. ■

With over 53 million Americans having a disability, large corporations as well as small companies use this outstanding video to train employees, improve customer service and avoid losing talented employees due to ignorance or awkwardness. The DVD package also includes handouts.

Scheduling and Dispatching Training Package for Rural Transit Systems – are educational materials that describe the scheduler's and dispatcher's roles and responsibilities within the transit system. It also introduces core technologies that enhance rural transit scheduling and dispatching, describes the impact that ITS technologies have on rural transit operations, identifies factors to consider when implementing new technology, and details the keys for successful implementation of new technologies. The training package, produced by the National Transit Institute and the Rural Transit Assistance Program, includes a DVD and Workbook.

All materials in CASTA's library are available on loan. To borrow a DVD or check out a specific manual, please contact Michael Mulhern at 303.839.5197 or michaelm@coloradotransit.com. ■

SUMMIT COUNTY continued from cover...

tremendous example of a concrete thing that will be here for decades," he said. The existing facility was built in the 1960s and doesn't meet the needs of Colorado's fourth-largest transit system.

"We're in the big leagues in terms of transit," said County Commissioner Karn Stiegelmeier. The new facility includes green features like solar panels. A pair of local companies will build the new structure, located right next to the existing Frisco recycling drop-off center.

Stiegelmeier said there are serious safety issues associated with the existing building. The plan is to work on the structure straight through the winter, with completion scheduled some time next year.

Summit Stage officials said during a recent transit board meeting they hope to have a roof on the structure before the big snows of winter start piling up.

Other elected officials, including Congressman Jared Polis, State Sen. Dan Gibbs and State Rep. Christine Scanlan, hailed the project as an example of collaboration between federal lawmakers and state and local governments and agencies. ■

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UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information on events visit

www.coloradotransit.com and click on

Conferences and Training.

- **Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) Training**
October 29-30, 2009
Sponsor: CASTA & Pueblo Transit
Location: Pueblo, CO
- **Principles of Transit Management**
November 3-5, 2009
Sponsor: CASTA & SURTC
Location: Lakewood, CO
- **Passenger Service and Safety (PASS) Training**
November 11-12, 2009
Sponsor: CASTA
Location: Durango, CO
- **Defensive Driving Training**
November 13, 2009
Sponsor: CASTA
Location: Durango, CO
- **Transit Rail System Safety**
February 8-12, 2010
Sponsor: TSI, RTD
Location: Denver, CO
- **Transit Rail Incident Investigation**
March 29-April 2, 2010
Sponsor: TSI, RTD
Location: Denver, CO
- **CASTA Spring Training Conference 2010**
May 4-7, 2010
Sponsor: CASTA
Location: Denver, CO
- **Community Transportation EXPO**
May 23-28, 2010
Sponsor: CTAA
Location: Long Beach, CA
- **Fundamentals of Bus Collision Investigations**
June 29-July 2, 2010
Sponsor: TSI, RTD
Location: Denver, CO
- **CASTA/CDOT Fall Transit Conference & EXPO 2010**
September 14-17, 2010
Sponsor: CASTA & CDOT
Location: Beaver Creek, CO
- **APTA Annual Meeting**
October 3-6, 2010
Sponsor: APTA
Location: San Antonio, TX
- **19th National Conference on Rural Public & Intercity Bus Transportation**
October 24-28, 2010
Sponsor: TRB, FTA, RTAP
Location: Burlington, Vermont

In accordance with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Civil Rights Act of 1964, CASTA does not discriminate on the the basis of disability, race, color, national origin or gender. For more information about these statutes, or to file a complaint, contact CASTA Executive Director: 303.839.5197