

COLORADO RTAP PROGRAM TRAINS OVER 500 COLORADO TRANSIT PROFESSIONALS

In 2010, the Colorado RTAP program trained over 500 transit professionals in Colorado. The program, administered the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) by CASTA, provides training and technical assistance to rural transit providers in Colorado. The program consists of several programs, including regional and on-site training, two annual transit conferences, RTAP Trainer professional development, a resource library, on-call technical assistance, the Colorado RTAP website and the scholarship program.

National Safety Council's (NSC) Defensive Driving program is the country's premier driver trainer program. Through a unique agreement with NSC, CASTA is the Colorado administrator for the program, allowing the Colorado RTAP program to provide training on-site and at cost.

In 2011, Colorado RTAP:

- Certified 11 new Defensive Driving instructors, and renewed 12 certifications for existing instructors.
- Trained 230 Colorado transit drivers in Defensive Driving.
- Distributed 237 Defensive Driving Manuals distributed to agencies.
- Distributed 25 New 9th edition instructor manuals distributed.
- Maintained 5 video leases as part of the RTAP Library.

The regional training model, first adopted in 2008, finally took full force this year, with 6 trainings in 9 locations throughout the state. Colorado RTAP provided training for 111 transit professionals. One training was cancelled due to low enrollment.



Two RTAP trainers provided training on the Defensive Driving Train-the-Trainer and CTAAs Passenger Safety and Service (PASS). This program provides local trainers experience and professional

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PUEBLO TRANSIT ROLLS OUT 10 NEW BUSES IN STYLE

Reprinted with permission from Pueblo Transit

Pueblo Transit, the City of Pueblo, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA) celebrated the rollout of ten (10) brand new transit buses on Wednesday, December 15, 2010 at their Transit Center. Regular bus service was suspended between 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. to give the transit riders an opportunity to participate in the event.

City officials joined county, state dignitaries and the public in the morning celebration.

The new fleet of buses was purchased with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), Senate-1 Bill funds, and the Federal Transit Administration 5309

Capital Grants fund for FY 2007 and 2008. In addition to enhancing safety and security, the new fleet of buses will offer improved service reliability and upgraded, comfortable interiors for customers.

"The buses are all equipped with wheelchair lifts and a kneeling feature, electronic fare boxes, and will meet or exceed the latest environmental standards by incorporating technologies to reduce exhaust emissions," said Director of Transit Brenda Broyles. The new fleet of buses also includes the purchase of a 35' hybrid bus and the purchase of two (2) 40' buses, to increase seating and standing capacity for riders.

"The safety and security of our bus operators and customers is our highest priority,

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to 2011. I hope that your 2010 was a good year and that Santa CDOT and Father FTA brought lots of transit goodies to your stockings.

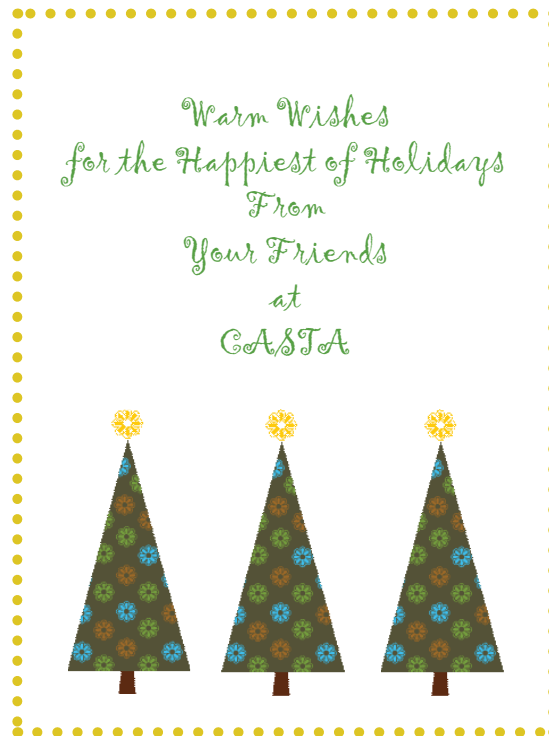
It's been a hectic and busy year for the folks at CASTA and for your board of directors. We've put together a good work plan for the CASTA staff and have a lot of goals in mind for the coming year. Hopefully, all of the hard work that went into 2010 will start to bear fruit in 2011 as we begin to see the results of the new Division of Transit and Rail, the funding process for the FASTER funds, and the hard work at the federal level to implement a new reauthorization bill.

I can tell you that CASTA is just as excited about the implementation of its new web features and its expansion of services to all members. We will also be working diligently with the CTC to develop a framework for future capital funding for Colorado particularly in this new political climate. It will be interesting to see how our new governor fits into all of this and what his agenda will be. There is a lot of work to be done.



I hope that you took some time for yourself this holiday season to recharge your batteries and prepare for an exceptional year to come. The sense of positive optimism within the Colorado transit community continues to this day. All we need to do is harness that power and we should be able to accomplish anything we set our minds to. Here is to 2011 and achieving our goals!

With positive thoughts,
Rob Andresen, President ▪



ARRA GRANT FUNDS BUS REFURBISHMENT PROJECT: TWO BRECK BUSES, ONE COLORADO BUSINESS GET NEW LEASE ON LIFE

By Caddie Nath and reprinted with permission from the Summit Daily News

Two Breckenridge buses and one company in Lamar got a second chance after Breckenridge landed a stimulus grant to cover a restoration project.

With a \$286,000 grant from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Town of Breckenridge contracted American Transit Works, based in Lamar, to refurbish a few of the town's buses, putting seven people back to work.

Commissions from the Town of Breckenridge to refurbish a total of four new buses over the last two years have breathed new life into the once-flagging company. The bus restoration projects allowed the company to bring on new staff in an economically challenged community that needed the employment opportunities.

"We did two (buses) last year and two this year," said Mike Cook, a production shop manager for American Transit Works. "That's kept our doors pretty much open."

American Transit gave the buses a full mid-life make over. One of the buses, after two years of retirement due to electrical problems, was brought back to life. The other bus got new paint and flooring as well as a new engine and transmission, according to a statement released by the town of Breckenridge. Breckenridge Mayor John Warner recommissioned one of the buses in October.

The typical bus has a life cycle of 12 years.

The project helped American Transit Works get back on its feet. It has now landed jobs refurbishing buses for Summit County and working for other governments across the country.

"Summit County was very happy with the workmanship they had seen at the Town of Breckenridge," Cook said. "It was just a great opportunity to get to work with Breckenridge." Now, American Transit is paying the business oppor-

tunities forward, doing as much business as possible with local suppliers in Lamar, Cook said. Cook has lived in Lamar for 30 years.

In 2005, Cook's former employer, Neoplan, a manufacturer of transit and commuter buses, closed down its factory in Lamar after 25 years. American Transit was able to bring on some of Neoplan's former staff to put together a specialized team to complete the projects.

The buses are part of Breckenridge's free ride fleet. Restoring older buses rather than buying new ones when possible is in line with the town's sustainability platform.

SDN reporter Caddie Nath can be reached at (970) 668-4628 or at cnath@summitdaily.com.

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Before



After

CONGRESS APPROVES SHORT-TERM CONTINUING RESOLUTION TO FUND FEDERAL PROGRAMS THROUGH MARCH 4, 2011 – EXTENSION OF SAFETEA-LU INCLUDED

By Paul Dean, APTA's Government Affairs Department

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives approved the Continuing Appropriations and Surface Transportation Extensions Act of 2011, a continuing resolution (CR) to fund federal programs, including programs administered by the Department of Transportation and the Transportation Security Administration, at Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 levels through March 4, 2011. The bill also includes an extension of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) through March 4, 2011. The previous extension of SAFETEA-LU was set to expire on December 31, 2010. This is the sixth extension of SAFETEA-LU since the original authorization expired on September 30, 2009. Incoming Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John Mica (R-FL) has indicated that the drafting of a new, long term authorization bill will be a top priority when Congress returns in January.

This legislation replaced earlier attempts to fund federal programs through the end of FY 2011. This latest bill, combined with earlier CRs, now makes five months of FY 2011 funding available to transit programs, or approximately 42.5 percent of the full FY 2010 amount. Traditionally, this level has been sufficient for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to release a partial-year apportionment notice to make a portion of the formula funds for FY 2011 available to transit agencies. It is not clear, however, whether the FTA or Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will make funds available for discretionary programs, such as Bus and Bus Facilities grants, High Speed Rail grants, or National Infrastructure Investments (TIGER) un-

til the new Congress completes a full appropriations bill for FY 2011 early next year.

The short-term CR will give the new 112th Congress, which will be sworn-in in January, the opportunity to complete the Appropriations process for FY 2011. Many Congressional leaders, particularly within the new Republican majority in the House, have indicated they will attempt to reduce the overall level of federal spending for FY 2011 to help reduce the federal budget deficit. We

urge you to contact your U.S. Senators and Representatives by early January to urge them to preserve the level of spending for the federal transit and high speed and intercity passenger rail programs as they work to complete the appropriations bills for 2011 early next year.

The 111th Congress is expected to wrap up its remaining legislative business this week. The swearing-in of the 112th Congress will take place on Wednesday, January 5.

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PUEBLO ROLLS OUT 10 NEW BUSES continued...

and the inclusion of a state of the art video surveillance cameras will mean a big step forward in enhancing onboard safety," said Pat Manzanaras, Operations Supervisor.

"This action represents one of the most significant investments in Pueblo Transit's bus system, thanks to continued support and interest from our Federal, State and Local partners" says Broyles. "This is a significant accomplishment for the overall operations of the transit system in Pueblo and I hope that all riders will enjoy a safe and smooth ride during the holiday season."

The new buses will be placed on different routes every day so the entire community will be able to benefit from and experience them. ▀



One of Pueblo's new beauties ready to roll.

CDOT MOVES FASTER FUNDING FORWARD

On December 16, 2010, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Commissioners voted unanimously to support the list of regional transit projects forwarded by the Intermodal and Transit Committee, with the exception of a \$2.3 million feasibility study on the I-70 Mountain corridor. The Study will be discussed further in January. Also in January the Commission will vote on the list of local transit projects put together by the CDOT regions as part of the CDOT Region Project Priority Programming Process (a.k.a.4P).

The FASTER transit funding was created in 2010 as part of the FASTER legislation, SB-109. This landmark piece of legislation created the Division of Transit and Rail, funded a Bridge Enterprise for Colorado's most deficient bridges, and provides critical funding for much-needed roadway improvements using an increase in vehicle registration fees. It represents Colorado's first-ever dedicated and reliable source of funding for transit.

The transit funding is split into two parts: a \$5 million program for local transit, administered and funded by the CDOT regions, and a \$10 million program for transit projects of statewide significance. Projects can include rolling stock purchases, facility building and studies, although no more than 10% of the funding can be spent on studies.

The approved list of statewide projects includes:

- US 36 Managed Lanes and Bus Rapid Transit facilities
- Trinidad Multimodal Facility
- FREX Intercity Bus Capital Preventative Maintenance Program
- Silver Key Senior Services and Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments specialized transportation coordination software
- Mountain Metropolitan Transit Vanpool replacement
- Grand Valley Transit Multimodal transfer station
- Denver Union Station renovations to accommodate Amtrak
- Interregional coordination software for Eagle, Lake, Garfield and Pitkin Counties
- Avon Regional Transportation Operations Facility
- Bike and pedestrian path from Durango Transit Center to medical facility
- Bike and pedestrian bridge from Alameda light rail station to proposed Greyhound station

In addition to these projects, the Transportation Commission is funding a series of park-n-ride facilities that are critical to the function of the statewide transit network. ▀



GROUNDBREAKING TRAINING TO GUIDE YOU TO BREAKING GROUND

The Transit Facilities: Design, Develop, Deploy workshop was offered by CASTA in partnership with FTA Region 8 in early December. The course was developed to help small and rural agencies understand the process required when planning, developing and building a federally funded facility. FTA consultant Bill Thomsen, Senior Vice President of Urban Engineers, led course participants on a detailed tour through FTA's construction management handbook. Case studies of best practices and lessons learned were shared during guest presentations by John Jones of Summit Stage and Amber Blake of Durango Transit who saw their agencies through the building of facilities.

The course was open to all of FTA's Region 8 and thirty-eight people from three states attended. Participants represented transit systems of all sizes and were joined by a number of contractors as well as CDOT and FTA representatives. Initial feedback from course attendees indicated that participants valued the course for providing an overview of the requirements and the opportunity to engage in a significant exchange with FTA representatives in addition to those who had already completed facilities.

To view the slide presentation from the Transit Facilities course, please visit CASTA's website at www.coloradotransit.com. You'll also find a link to the

FTA Construction Project Management Handbook.

A number of individuals have expressed interest in additional training on specific parts of the facility process, so be sure to stay tuned to hear what gets loaded onto the CASTA training calendar. If there's a specific training that you would find helpful, please contact CASTA at 303.839.5197 or email Ann Rajewski at annr@coloradotransit.com.

NAILING DOWN "SHOVEL READY"

What does shovel ready really mean? How do we define it? These critical questions have been raised more than once, to be sure, but have often met with less than satisfying answers. Part of the issue that leaves a person feeling like they're dancing a shovel-ready-shuffle (to which they haven't been taught the steps) is that the definition of what shovel ready is, may change based on the grant program involved. The definition may also change as federal processes are impacted by factors such as the recession and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding priorities.

CASTA staff conducted some informal research and found that facilities in Colorado funded pre-ARRA were generally not as far along in development when funding was awarded versus those that have been funded with ARRA or federal grant funds post-ARRA. In fact, one of our sources indicated that their facility was awarded funding on the merits of good planning and demographic projections even though they didn't have local fund-

ing in place, a design concept or the location the facility would be built. They successfully completed their facility but mentioned that this approach wouldn't be acceptable today.

In contrast, when Summit Stage was awarded ARRA funding for their new maintenance facility, they had already spent \$662,000 in county funds to finalize facility design, completed most of the required environmental work, had utilities subbed in and other site prep work done. RFTA, who is in the process of recommissioning their Aspen maintenance facility, had two out of three phases of the project completely designed and the environmental process completed when they received a State of Good Repair grant award in late 2010.

Summit Stage and RFTA are not alone. In 2010, agencies that were successful in obtaining grants to fund facilities were further along in project development plans.

To get back to the original questions we

opened with, let's explore what components of being "shovel ready" could provide you with an advantageous position when competing for grant funding. Agencies that were awarded funding by the 2010 federal grants have generally:

- Had some (30% or more) of the required design work completed.
- Had either completed or were in the process of completing the environmental work on their site.
- Had local funding in place and may have already used it to pay for a portion of the initial design and environmental work.

Keep in mind that different funding opportunities may require different components to consider your project shovel ready. When in doubt, always feel free to contact your project liaison at FTA and/or CDOT who are ready, willing and eager to partner with you. ■

CASTA BOARD SETS WORKPLAN INITIATIVES

The CASTA board of directors met in November for a two day strategic planning retreat. The retreat began by looking at CASTA's accomplishments over the past several years which produced a long and varied list of items that included: providing quality conferences and training opportunities, participating in the creation of the Division of Transit and Rail (DTR), expanding membership services and state legislative wins with Yield-to-Bus and FASTER – the first legislation to dedicate general funds to transit.

Based on CASTA's vision and mission, the board created five initiatives to guide the organization over the next few years:

Advocate for the Integration of Transit, including Inter-Regional Connectivity, in the Transportation Planning Process

This initiative grew out of a desire to foster smarter transit planning, locally, regionally and state wide. CASTA staff plans to collaborate with the DTR to develop a statewide transit plan, identify gaps in transit service and determine appropriate options to fill those gaps. In addition, CASTA will provide training and information to facilitate the development of relationships between local agencies and their transportation planning regions and/or other planning organizations.

Build Relationships to Sell the Colorado Transit Story at the Federal Level to Increase Colorado's Share of Federal Funding.

CASTA will work with Colorado's congressional delegation staff to increase reliable and consistent sources of funding for transit in Colorado. The federal lobbying effort will continue as we advocate on federal policy and provide input during the reauthorization process.

Identify the Benefits of Transit to Educate Decision-Makers and the Public

We will assist the CDOT DTR as they conduct a study on the economic benefits of transit in Colorado. Once the study is complete we will develop a message to promote the benefits of transit as a justification for more funding locally, regionally and statewide.

Strengthen the Working Relationship between CASTA and CDOT

CASTA looks forward to continuing its solid partnership with CDOT. Staff will work closely with the DTR to collaborate on critical issues facing transit in Colorado, which includes addressing member concerns such as reimbursement issues. As part of this effort CASTA will serve on the Division of Transit and Rail Advisory Committee.

Provide Policy Input to Government Leaders

Staff will continue to cultivate working relationships with various state and federal departments to address key issues that face Colorado transit agencies. Under this initiative, CASTA will continue to work with the Department of Revenue to address concerns relating to Commercial Drivers Licenses and the Department of Human Services to further investigate and pursue the use of local funds to match federal Medicaid funds. CASTA will also seek to further develop its valuable relationship with FTA Region 8 as well as FTA headquarters. ■

COLORADO RTAP PROGRAM continued...

development opportunities, as well as holding training costs down for the RTAP program.

Colorado RTAP published 4 hard copy newsletters and 22 e-newsletters and distributed to the database of over 1,100 interested individuals. The database includes transit professionals from all levels of the transit agencies, as well as local and federal elected officials, transportation planners and other interested parties.

Finally, the RTAP program hosted trainings at the two transit conferences. The Spring Training Conference, held in Denver, enjoyed record attendance and included sessions on coordination, dispatch, safety and planning. The Fall Transit Conference, co-hosted by CASTA and CDOT, brought together transit professionals, housing interests, the environmental community and the industry businesses to discuss and learn about rural transit policy, planning and funding. Over

200 rural transit professionals received training at the conferences.

While this was a banner year for the Colorado RTAP program, we are already hard at work planning for 2011. Look for the Training Calendar in your mailboxes in January. If you have any questions on how the RTAP program can help your organization, please call Elena Wilken at 303-839-5197. ■

DE ANNE TYNER OF PROWERS COUNTY RETIRES

De Anne Tyner, former Director of the Prairie Dog Express in Prowers County, retired on December 15, 2010. De Anne leaves a legacy of 37 years of excellence in service at Prowers County; 12 of those years dedicated to transit within the county. Please join CASTA in congratulating De Anne and wishing her all the best! ▪

NATIONAL RTAP RELEASES REVISED EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FOR RURAL TRANSIT DRIVERS

The Emergency Procedures module offers the most current training on preparedness for hazards and threats that transit operators may encounter. The module contains a Learner's Guide, a Self-paced eLearning Course Disc, an Instructor's Guide, a disc with videos and a trainer's PowerPoint presentation. Email info@nationalrtap.org or call 888-589-6821 to order. ▪

THE DISABILITY RIGHTS EDUCATION AND DEFENSE FUND (DREDF) ADA TOPIC GUIDES

DREDF recently released a series of Topic Guides on Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transportation. The seven Topic Guides are available at <http://www.dredf.org/ADAatg/>.

The ADA National Network and Easter Seals Project ACTION will be hosting webinars on each of the Topic Guides. Webinars will be held on the second Tuesday of every month through April 12, 2011, from 2:00-3:30 pm Eastern. Webinar registration is available at www.adaconferences.org ▪

UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information on events visit

www.coloradotransit.com and click on Conferences and Training.

- **SWTA Annual Conference**
February 28 - Mar 2, 2011
Sponsor: SWTA
Location: Austin, TX
- **APTA Legislative Conference**
March 13-15, 2011
Sponsor: APTA
Location: Washington, DC
- **NTI Transit Trainers Workshop**
April 10 -12, 2011
Sponsor: NTI
Location: Tampa, FL
- **CASTA Spring Training Conference 2011**
May 10-13, 2011
Sponsor: CASTA, RTAP
Location: Pueblo Convention Center, Pueblo, CO
- **Transportation Planning, Land Use, and Air Quality Conference**
May 10-11, 2010
Sponsor: The Transportation Research Board
Location: San Antonio, TX
- **CTAA EXPO**
June 5-10, 2011
Sponsor: CTAA
Location: Indianapolis, IN
- **Advanced Problems in Bus Collision Investigation**
July 11-15, 2011
Sponsor: TSI & RTD
Location: Denver, CO
- **Principles of Transit Management**
August 9-11, 2011
Sponsor: CASTA, SURTC
Location: Ramada Inn & Suites
Glenwood Springs, CO
- **CASTA-CDOT Fall Transit Conference & EXPO 2011**
September 6-9, 2011
Sponsor: CASTA, CDOT
Location: Sheraton Steamboat Resort
Steamboat Springs, CO
- **APTA Annual Meeting**
October 2-5, 2011
Sponsor: APTA
Location: New Orleans, LA