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News from the NM Transit Association President



Dear NMTA Members,

I hope you all are having a happy and safe summer. As New Mexico currently is experiencing higher temperatures, it is important to make sure employees and

passengers keep hydrated and safe by following the Heat Safety Tips listed below:

- Stay hydrated throughout the day by drinking water steadily; don't wait until you're thirsty
- Avoid caffeine which causes water loss more rapidly
- Take frequent breaks in the shade or indoors in an air-conditioned space
- Check the local news and other outlets for important safety information



When overheating does happen, it is important to recognize the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) identifies four stages of heat-related illness:

- Heat Rash – Heat Rash is an irritation to the skin caused by sweat buildup and is treatable by being in a cool environment with good ventilation.
- Heat Cramps – Sweating causes a loss of body salts and fluids which can cause heat cramps. An individual suffering from muscle spasms or pain due to the heat should move to a cool area, rest and hydrate.
- Heat Exhaustion – Heat Exhaustion happens when the body loses too much water and salt. Signs of heat exhaustion include cool, moist skin; nausea; headache; dizziness; weakness and rapid pulse. Individuals with any of these symptoms should immediately lie down in a cool area, drink lots of water and apply cold compresses or ice packs if available. If symptoms worsen or don't begin to resolve within 10-15 minutes, they should be transported to an emergency room.

- Heat Stroke – Heat Stroke is a medical emergency. If an individual suddenly stops sweating and feels hot to the touch, becomes confused, faints or has seizures, call 911. Place individuals in a cool, shady area and apply ice or cold compresses. Have them drink water if they are able.

NMTA's Legislative Subcommittee and Lobbyist J.D. Bullington continue to prepare for the NM 2024 Legislative Session. They are supporting legislation for a "State Transit Fund" and "Yield to Bus" rule. In addition to working on these two items, the Legislative Subcommittee and Mr. Bullington are also looking at possible legislative changes that would enhance penalties for individuals who assault transit workers ensuring the safety of New Mexico's transit workers.



I encourage members to volunteer to serve on NMTA's Subcommittees which can be found at <https://nm-ta.com/subcommittees/>. If interested, please send an email to Melissa Drake at NMTA (mdrake@nm-ta.com). Having

different views and perspectives allows NMTA to better serve its members.

NMTA is currently working on its FY2024 training calendar along with NMDOT. If you would like to see training on a topic you consider important and/or have recommendations for trainers, please email Melissa Drake at (mdrake@nm-ta.com).

The NMTA Board thanks all of its members for the services you provide to your communities.

Be safe and stay cool,

Liz



News from New Mexico Department of Transportation

News From NM Department of Transportation

Sections 5310 and 5311 Awards

The annual awards for the 5310 and 5311 subrecipients have been announced and are available on the Transit Bureau webpage. For program year 2024, subrecipients will receive \$19.75M in Federal assistance.

<https://www.dot.nm.gov/planning-research-multimodal-and-safety/modal/transit-rail/transit-bureau/>

Staff has also sent award letters to each subrecipient, and the Memoranda of Agreement will be routed for signatures prior to the beginning of the program year on October 1, 2023.

The application process for program year 2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025) for Sections 5310 and 5311 has kicked off with requests for letters of intent to apply. This notice is also available on the Transit Bureau website (link above). If you have not submitted a letter of intent to apply, please reach out to a program manager as soon as possible so that the application opportunity can be opened for you in Blackcat.

NMGo! Vanpool Program Expansion

The NMGo! Vanpool program, operated by Commute with Enterprise, has just executed a new contract that will expand eligibility to the entire state. The previous contract focused on Las Cruces, Santa Fe, Los Lunas, and Farmington. NMGo! subsidizes a portion of

the monthly costs for vanpoolers. More information on the program is available at the following link:

<https://www.commutewithenterprise.com/en/partners/nmgo.html>

Rural Microtransit Study

NMDOT has just executed an agreement with UNM to prepare a study of Best Practices for Rural Microtransit. The study will look at the characteristics of successful rural microtransit programs in other parts of the country and

discuss the opportunities to launch rural microtransit services in New Mexico. The report is expected to be completed in early 2024.

2023 Transit Guide

The 2023 Transit Guide, which catalogs all the Section 5310 and public transit services in the state, is now available on the Transit and Rail Division webpage.

<https://www.dot.nm.gov/planning-research-multimodal-and-safety/modal/transit-rail/>

NMDOT Statewide Public Transportation Study Update

NMDOT and its contractor, Nelson Nygaard, continue to make progress with the Statewide Public Transportation Study. The State of the System report is nearly complete. This will be followed by draft recommendations, a prioritized list of programs and an investments report.

Please go to www.connectnmstudy.com for more information regarding NMDOT's study and project timeline.

Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans

Last updated in 2019, NMDOT has started updating the seven Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Regional Plans (CPHSTP). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires that the plans are updated and submitted to FTA every four years.

The Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plans will identify the transportation needs of older adults, individuals with disabilities, households without vehicles and persons living below the poverty line. It will also include strategies for meeting the needs of these disadvantaged population groups and prioritizing transportation services for funding implementation to address these needs. The seven plan updates will be conducted at the RTPO

regional level and data for the MPOs will be integrated into the RTPO descriptions. The final plans will be submitted to FTA in September 2023.

The current plans can be found at the following link: <https://www.dot.nm.gov/planning-research-multimodal-and-safety/modal/transit-rail/transit-bureau/>

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Highlighting New Mexico Transit Members



South Central Regional Transit District

Bus Ridership Rises 28 Percent

Anthony, New Mexico - Ridership rose 28 percent in the past fiscal year, with 99,318 trips generated from communities in Hatch, Las Cruces, Anthony, Chaparral, Sunland Park, and unincorporated areas of Doña Ana County and El Paso. Ridership has grown for three consecutive years in the SCRTD service area.

The district is preparing to transition its bus fleet to zero-emission vehicles. Funding to support this transition will come from federal and state grants received in Fiscal Year 2023. These funds will support the acquisition of ten electric buses, the first four of which should be delivered by June 2024.

South Central RTD Executive Director David Armijo said, "The continued rise in ridership is due to the district attracting more riders by increasing service on its bus routes across the Mesilla Valley. Adding zero-emission electric

buses adds another challenge but will improve air quality and reduce maintenance costs by lowering vehicle emissions." The district is working with El Paso Electric to prepare for the transition to zero-emission electric buses.

About SCRTD:

SCRTD was formed in 2006 and began service operations in 2016. The agency operates seven bus routes that serve three counties carrying more than 99,000 riders in the past year, a 28 percent annual growth rate. SCRTD services connect riders with Las Cruces' Road-runner, El Paso's Sun Metro and other regional services.

General information about the agency is available at scrttd.org. Bus schedules are available for review at scrttd.org/all-lines. Schedule information is also available by calling (575) 323-1620.



New Arboc Buses arrived in early June from Model 1 (previously Creative Bus Sales).

Share Your Story!!!

It is always so exciting to hear what transit is doing throughout New Mexico. NMTA is working diligently to highlight our New Mexico agencies through the NMTA Quarterly Newsletter, Social Media, and Op-eds.

As you all know, transit does so much in each of our communities. The goal of NMTA is to let New Mexico residents and government know all the positive service transit provides in our state. The more stories you contribute with us, the more information we have to share.

Articles can be highlights of special staff members who always go above and beyond to ensure quality service, stories from our passengers sharing their experience and the role that public transit plays in their lives, or about your agencies involvement in community activities/events.

Email your story to Melissa Drake at mdrake@nm-ta.com today!

NCRTD Board of Directors Approves 20-year Long Range Strategic Plan

The North Central RTD (The “District” or NCRTD) Board of Directors has approved a new Long Range Strategic Plan that will affect all service areas in efforts to enrich main town centers, to improve accessibility and to expand service.

The Long Range Strategic Plan (LRSP) details the commitments and goals of the District over a 20 year period and will be reviewed periodically throughout the upcoming years. This will ensure that the LRSP stays up-to-date with current affairs and technology that may affect the District’s plan.

These projects will affect all service areas in the 10,000 square miles the North Central RTD covers in hopes of improving service for riders. Notable projects include the following:

- Zero-Emission Bus Plan to aid in the reduction of pollution. The District aims to transition its entire fleet to zero-emission vehicles in a commitment to sustainability.
- An efficient microtransit system to establish greater mobility in communities of less than 2,000 people. This service aims to provide better flexibility and connection for rural regions.
- Expanded service on preexisting routes to provide more flexibility and connectivity among other state transportation services. The District hopes to include weekend service where applicable, make better timed transfers and increase frequency on routes.

- Incorporate a Bus Rapid Transit system that streamlines routes connecting Santa Fe, Taos, and Española. This will be a high-frequency system that runs 7 days a week when fully operational.

The North Central RTD is excited to pursue these goals with a service-oriented mindset. This plan was established to help District riders travel throughout north central New Mexico while making a commitment to sustainability, efficiency and community. The District hopes to be a leader in the expansion and use of public transportation in New Mexico.

The North Central Regional Transit District provides fare-free bus service to an area that encompasses over 10,000 square miles of north central New Mexico including the counties of Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe and Taos, the Eight Northern Pueblos and the Jicarilla Apache Nation. For more information or to view available routes visit RidetheBlueBus.com.



News from



North
Central
Regional
Transit
District

The North Central RTD Plans to Transition to a Zero Emission Fleet

The North Central RTD is committed to being an environmentally conscious and sustainable partner. One component of this goal is to reduce its carbon footprint through zero-emission buses (ZEBs). The transition plan evaluates the current and planned facilities to determine how ZEBs can be accommodated, financial and funding efforts, and how the NCRTD workforce can support a zero-emission fleet.

The District plans on incorporating charging stations at various current and planned facilities across the state. The recently constructed Española facility was built with this in mind, and construction of future facilities will also incorporate charging capacity. Other facilities will be modified when applicable to support ZEBs.


The transition plan also details the logistics of traveling on a fixed route while incorporating the need to stop and charge the vehicle, in order to ensure that route efficiency and service is maintained. Future testing will be done to clarify route times and needs.

Significant investments are required for the success of this transition plan. Funding is expected to come from various grant opportunities at the federal and state level. With nationwide movements to support environmental sustainability, the District hopes to receive substantial funding for the success of this project.

Additionally, the District recognizes that the workforce is a critical component of the success of this project. Employees will be trained on the necessary skills pertaining to their job duties in relation to a zero-emission fleet. Sustainability is a common goal that NCRTD staff continuously strive for.

The District is actively working towards the purchase of their first zero emission buses and is excited to pursue the transition to a full fleet of zero-emission vehicles.

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**NORTH
CENTRAL
RTD**

 The logo is set against a blue background with a geometric, low-poly pattern. To the right of the text is a stylized graphic of a wheel or a fan with multiple curved segments.

FTA Awards \$8 million grant to NCRTD to purchase hybrid-electric buses and modernize and expand bus facilities in Taos and Española



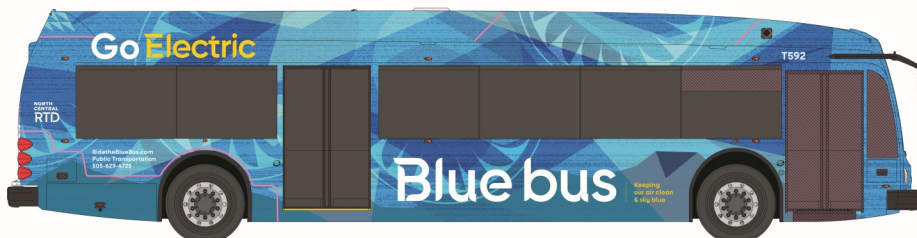
Jim West Regional Transit Center in Española

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has awarded the North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) nearly \$8 million from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law for transit projects. NCRTD, known as the Blue Bus across north central New Mexico, will receive \$5.9 million to renovate the District's Jim West Regional Transit Center in Española and complete the second phase of construction for the future Taos Operations and Maintenance Facility. These projects will improve maintenance and service reliability and accommodate current and future transit needs. NCRTD will also receive \$2 million to buy diesel-electric hybrid buses. The District will begin the transition to a zero-emission fleet in 2024, and these buses will provide a transitional low-emission technology to operate on lengthy regional routes throughout the four-county service area that are not yet suitable for battery-electric buses. The projects are supported by FTA's Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities and Low- and No-Emission (Low-No) Vehicle programs. The Buses and Bus

Facilities program provides federal funding for transit agencies to buy and rehabilitate buses and vans and build and modernize bus facilities. "The NCRTD was pleased to learn about the funding allocated for the Taos Operations and Maintenance Facility Phase II since this will provide funds for construction of the fleet maintenance building which is a critical component for the maintenance of vehicles and to provide safe and efficient transit services to Taos County," said Anthony Mortillaro, NCRTD's Executive Director. "The funds received for the Jim West Phase I expansion will allow the District to remodel the existing 12,500 square feet of space to alleviate overcrowding and provide for future space needs." The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides nearly \$2 billion through FY2026 for the program. For FY2023, approximately \$473 million for grants was available under this program.



Taos Operations and Maintenance Facility



News from



Rio Metro Regional Transit District

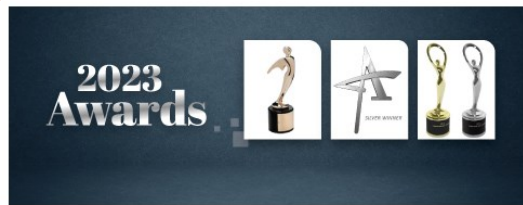
Celebrating 17 Years of Service!

The New Mexico Rail Runner Express began commuter rail service on July 14, 2006. To commemorate the 17-year anniversary, we put together 17 fun facts about the train. Did you know that the Rail Runner has taken 586,332,705 passenger miles off area roadways? Or that it takes approximately 150 staff and crew members to make the Rail Runner operational, including management,



mechanical, transportation, track, and signal communication? Visit www.riometro.org/anniversary to read all 17 fun facts. Meep Meep!

Rio Metro Honored with 12 Awards



Since the beginning of the year, Rio Metro's Marketing Department has received 12 local, national, and international awards. Six of

these awards were presented for the Rail Runner's "Seniors 60+ Ride Free on Wednesdays" video. Of the 12 awards received, seven are Communicator Awards from the Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts, the leading international awards program recognizing excellence in communication across a spectrum of industries. Visit www.riometro.org/awards to learn more.

Santa Fe National Cemetery Visitation Project Pilot Program

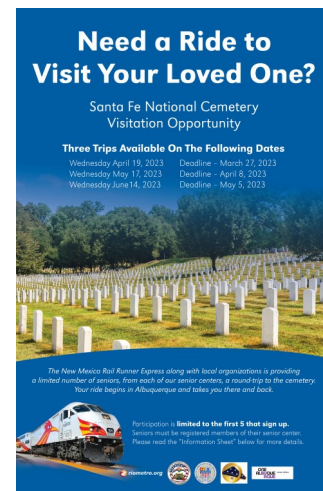
Over the last year, Rio Metro developed and implemented a pilot program to provide seniors with a unique opportunity to visit their loved ones interred at the Santa Fe National Cemetery. The pilot program consisted of three trips from Albuquerque area Senior Centers to the National Cemetery and back using the Rail Runner as the primary mode of transportation.

The trips took place on April 19, May 17, and June 14, 2023. Rio Metro Marketing Specialist Marie Morra collaborated with Rail Runner's Operations, the City of Albuquerque's Department of Senior Affairs, the City of Santa Fe's Senior Services Division and the Santa Fe National Cemetery. Each entity was responsible for a different leg of the journey. There was no cost to any of the seniors participating in this program.

"I had not been able to visit my spouse's resting place for 2 1/2 years because, as I get older, I'm not able to navigate the fast-paced interstate highway anymore," said one

participant. "I am most grateful and thank everyone who made it possible for me to visit my loved one."

Rio Metro is planning to continue this collaboration with the goal of coordinating three more trips in the Spring and Summer of 2024.



Operation Safe Driver Week Campaign: Tips from the Pros



Operation Safe Driver Week is a safe-driving awareness initiative that takes place annually in July. The campaign, which took place July 9-15, 2023, is aimed at improving the driving

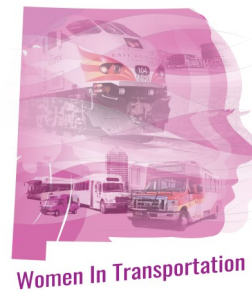
behaviors of passenger and commercial motor vehicle drivers. This year, Rio Metro promoted driver safety and awareness through a series of tips from our professional Bus Operators. Throughout the week, these important tips were shared to our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages. The information also appeared in the July e-newsletter and on the Rio Metro website, encouraging individuals to follow us and share the important pieces of advice.

Women in Transportation – The Series

Rio Metro kicked-off a new Women in Transportation profile series this spring highlighting the important contributions women are making within the industry and capturing their stories. Professionals interviewed for the series discuss professional achievements, the impact of women in the industry, career influences and more.

In the latest profile, Kendra Montanari, Transportation Planning and Technical Services Manager for the Mid-Region Council of Governments, talks about adapting to the ever-changing industry, the positive impact a mentor had on her approach to work and life

and the value of making face-to-face connections. Read her story and all the others at www.riometro.org/womenintransportation.



New Train Schedule

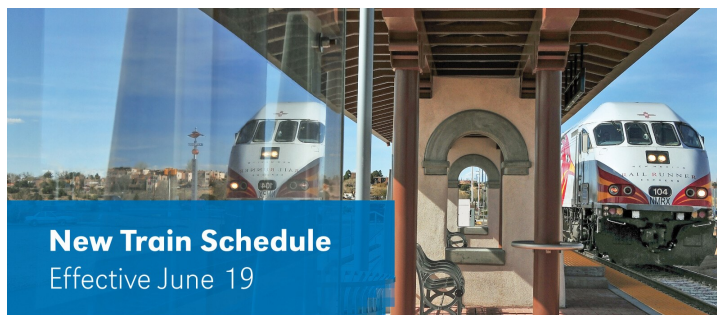
The New Mexico Rail Runner Express implemented an adjusted schedule on June 19, 2023. Changes include:

Both the morning and afternoon Express trains now stop at the Montañito Station

Additional northbound and southbound times were added on Sundays

Many of the times that were added when the schedule was updated in August 2022 have become permanent

Visit www.riometro.org/trainschedule to view the current schedule.



News from**South
West
Transit
Association**

SWTA Summer University 2023

Sunday, August 13, 2023 2:00 PM - Wednesday, August 16, 2023 5:00 PM (CDT)



Join us in Wichita, Kansas this August for SWTA's 2023 Summer U!

Summer University Seminars

- Transit Law
- Marketing
- Community Mobility
- SWTA: Next Gen
- Zero-Emissions Vehicles Maintenance Training

For more information or to register visit:

<https://members.swta.org/calendar/Details/swta-summer-university-2023-877384?sourceTypeId=Hub>

What's New at National RTAP?

If you're looking for something fun to do this summer, look no further than National RTAP. Join our Learn about TACL training on August 17, 2023, 2:00-3:00 PM ET. TACL, the Transportation Technical Assistance Coordination Library, helps rural and tribal transit agencies access information about public transportation coordination. The session will include a resource feature by Al Benedict and Nate Seeskin on SUMC's The Path to Mobility Interoperability.

If you like to read, join our Books in Transit Discussion Group to discuss *I Was Told It Would Get Easier* by Abbi Waxman. This book, available in library binding, paperback, kindle download and as an audiobook from Amazon.com, is about a mother and daughter who travel in a bus full of strangers for a college tour all along the east coast. Register for our meeting on August 22, 2023, 2:00-3:00 PM ET. The author will be joining us!

We're holding several contests – why don't you enter one or more? The National RTAP Tribal Transit Champions and Agencies Awards honor innovation, efficiency, commitment and performance in the tribal transit industry. Awards will be presented at our Technical Assistance Conference on December 3-6, 2023, in Myrtle Beach, SC. The deadline for nominations is October 20, 2023. Students are invited to submit a poster by October 6 for our conference too. Students must be able to present posters in-person on December 3.

Our National RTAP 2023 Photo Contest – This is Rural Transit – is all about the “rural” in rural transit. We're looking for photos that showcase the beauty and uniqueness of rural areas and tribal lands and highlight what makes small towns special. Entries must include a photo of the bus, bus stop, driver, and/or riders. Each transit agency can enter up to three photos by August 21, 2023.

We're always updating our resources and tools too. Several updates have been made to Rural iNTD, including complete asset data from 2019-2021 and an expanded search function to allow for quick identification of recipients and subrecipients.

National RTAP's updated Salary Ranges for Transit Jobs database was updated with new job title descriptions and accompanying salary ranges, such as Fare Revenue Specialist and Route Planner. The new database also includes a sheet displaying percentages of full- and part-time drivers receiving benefits, such as health insurance and paid time-off. Another new sheet shows the percentages of drivers, maintenance providers and administrators receiving salary increases from 2021-2022.



News from



National Rural Transit Assistance Program



Upcoming NMTA Quarterly Training Sessions and Transit Conferences...

Future training dates to be announced.

More From NMTA...

Please check nm-ta.com regularly for upcoming news, upcoming legislative agendas, events in transit and more.

The Myth Busters Brochure is also available for your review and use at the nm-ta.com website .

Follow us on Social Media:

Facebook [@New Mexico Transit Association](#)

Twitter [@NM_Transit](#)

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