

### Inside this Issue:

- News from NMTA 1
- News from NMDOT 2
- Highlighting A 4
- New Mexico Transit Member 4
- North Central RTD 5
- Rio Metro RTD 6
- News from SWTA 8
- News from National RTAP 9
- NMTA Board of Directors 11

### News from the NM Transit Association President



First, I want to say that NMTA has awesome member agencies! Thank you all for sending your agency logos to show support for the state transportation trust fund one sheet that Sunny505

has drafted and is currently working on finalizing which includes the other side for the highway funding. The Legislative Committee will continue to work with J.D. Bullington, NMTA's lobbyist, on this effort. I also want to thank Legislative Committee members, Anthony Mortillaro, Tom Marking and David Armijo for all the work they have done and continue to do on behalf of NMTA.

Melissa has been working with Marcy Jaffe to coordinate a quarterly training session that will assist our fixed route agencies to know how to use General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) for National Transit Database (NTD) Reporting. Using GTFS for NTD Reporting will be a requirement starting in Reporting Year 2023. The NTD Reporting that Includes GTFS training will be held on November 15, 2023, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton Santa Fe.

Melissa is also working with the Rio Rancho Event Center and Santa Ana Star Hotel staff to schedule the dates for the 2024 Bus Road-ee, Conference & Expo. Once finalized, she will let everyone know.

#### Fall Tips to Stay Healthy

- Physical Health – Exercise regularly, eat healthy, be active so that your body is always ready to function optimally. Stay hydrated and get 8 hours of sleep.
- Emotional Health – Learn to handle stress and anxiety. Don't let it control you. Know your strengths and believe that you will be able to overcome odds successfully. Shake it or walk it off.



- Mental Health – Your psychological well-being plays a crucial role in mental health. Feeling low? Talk to someone and seek help. Take a tech break.

- Social Health – Make friends, develop communication, and find a hobby. Positive interactions and something as simple as a good laugh help with your overall well-being.
- Spiritual Health – Clear your mind and set intentions for a good day ahead. Meditate and practice gratitude.

#### Fall Driving Safety Tips

The fall season means shorter days and less daylight which brings additional safety issues.

- Watch your step to prevent slip falls due to rain, ice and snow.
- It will be getting darker earlier so check your headlights for foggy or clouded lenses. Also keep windshield and wiper blades clean. Avoid sun glare and bring sunglasses.
- Check the battery as cold temperatures can cause a weak battery to fail suddenly.



- Inspect tires as changes in temperatures can cause tire pressure to change. Check tread depth to ensure ample grip on the road.

- Maintain a safe speed and increase distance from the vehicle ahead of you based upon weather conditions (rain, snow, etc.).
- Watch out for pedestrians and bikes on sidewalks, in crosswalks and at bus stops.
- Watch out for deer or other animals who are more likely to run into the road during the fall.
- If fatigued or sick, don't drive.



Thank you all for everything that you do for your communities! I wish you and your families a happy and safe Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Sincerely,  
Liz

#### Welcome to New Mexico

Winter is at 6 am  
Spring starts at 10 am  
Summer is at 2 pm  
And fall starts around 4:30ish  
Dress accordingly ☺



**News from New  
Mexico  
Department of  
Transportation**

## News From NM Department of Transportation

### Sections 5310 and 5311 Applications

The application process for program year 2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025) Sections 5310 and 5311 is underway. As a reminder, all applicants are required to present their applications to their respective

RTPO/MPO for review and ranking as part of the application process. Please make sure you are on the agenda for upcoming meetings. If you have any questions, please contact Vijay (info below).

### Safety Management Systems

Two new Safety Management System Subject Matter Expert Orientation presentations on safety risk management and safety assurance are now available on the Transit Bureau web page:

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

These presentations are intended primarily to support transit operators that are currently required to develop, maintain, and implement Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans (PTASPs). While FTA does not currently require Section 5311 and 5310 subrecipients to prepare PTASPs, these videos can be used to help all operators understand the best practices for maintaining safety protocols.

### 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 and a

prioritized list of programs and investments report. Please go to:

[www.connectnmstudy.com](http://www.connectnmstudy.com) for more information regarding NMDOT's study and project timeline.

### Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans

The updated Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation plans can be found at the following link:

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

### NMGo! Vanpool Program Expansion

The NMGo! Vanpool program, operated by Commute with Enterprise, has expanded 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

The Best Practices for Rural Microtransit Study is now underway. 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/>

## Staffing Update

Gabrielle Chavez has left the Transit Bureau for a position with Santa Fe Trails. We are grateful to her for all that she has done to support public transportation in the state, and

we wish her all the best in her new position. Until we are able to fill this staffing vacancy, please direct all questions, requests, etc., to Kevin (contact info below).

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## Highlighting New Mexico Transit Members



## Santa Fe Trails—City of Santa Fe

### What's New at Santa Fe Trails

Through a Section 5310 grant administered by NMDOT, Santa Fe Trails is awaiting delivery of five all-electric paratransit vans to add to the fleet. Santa Fe Trails will be working to install charging stations at its facility to put the vans in service as soon as possible. The five all-electric vans will be the first Electric Vehicles (EV) to be added to Santa Fe Trails' fleet.



Santa Fe Trails has partnered with Santa Fe Public Schools to develop safety awareness for the community and educate students and staff about the procedures and policies when utilizing Santa Fe Trails transit

services. Topics presented were how and where to locate rider information, benefits of using public transportation, rules while on the bus, definition of signage, what to do in case of an emergency, and how to utilize the bus as a safe place when reporting abuse. This initiative was developed in response to several local schools reaching out to fulfill transportation needs during the time of public-school bus driver shortages. Santa Fe Trails has provided transportation for 1,689 students, teachers, and chaperones over 37 trip requests in calendar year 2023.



Lastly, Santa Fe Trails is excited to announce that we have filled the Transit Director of Administration position and would like to welcome Gabrielle Chavez who is a local Santa Fean on board. Gabrielle was formerly the Commute Options Supervisor for NMDOT. She will be managing the FTA grants and assisting with operations.



### 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](mailto:mdrake@nm-ta.com) today!

## North Central Regional Transit District Groundbreaking Ceremony in Taos, NM



NMDOT Cabinet Secretary of Transportation Ricky Serna, U.S. Rep. Teresa Leger Fernandez, Taos Mayor Pascualito Maestas

Funding for the project includes a \$6,570,302 grant from the Federal Transit Administration, and \$5.9 million in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds, which will also fund the upgrades to the District's Regional Transit Center in Española. NMDOT has provided \$1,670,008 of federal grant funds from three of NMDOT's appropriations, and FTA awarded NCRTD \$5,135,942 from two FTA discretionary grants that NMDOT applied for.



Ricky Serna, NMDOT Cabinet Secretary of Transportation



Anthony Mortillaro, NCRD Executive Director

The North Central Regional Transit District held a groundbreaking ceremony September 6 on a \$17 million operations and maintenance facility in Taos. The project will include 7,200 square feet of administrative space and 10,800 square feet of maintenance

space. This includes bus, employee and visitor parking; state-of-the-art vehicle maintenance, repair and wash bays; a fueling station; EV charging stations; administrative offices; employee support facilities such as training rooms, locker rooms, and a wellness space. The site includes acreage for potential future workforce housing for Blue Bus staff.



NCRD Board Chair Dennis Tim Salazar

"As we break ground today, we are not just turning over shovels of dirt; we are sowing the seeds of progress, connectivity, and community prosperity," said

NCRD Board Chair Dennis Tim Salazar at the event. "When this facility is completed in January 2025, it won't just be a building; it will be a testament to our shared belief in a better future. It will be a place where our vehicles, our people, and our aspirations will converge, forging a path towards a more accessible, sustainable, and connected Taos and north central New Mexico."

When completed in early 2025, Blue Bus customers will benefit from the improved reliability, efficiency, safety, and effectiveness of transit operations. The facility will include commercial grade electric charging stations to accommodate the NCRD's plans to convert to a zero-emissions fleet by 2045. NCRD recently received \$2 million in federal grants to buy diesel-electric hybrid buses. The District will begin the transition to a zero-emission fleet in 2024, but the hybrid buses will provide transitional low-emission technology for lengthy regional routes throughout the four-county service area that are too long 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.



News from

**NORTH  
CENTRAL  
RTD**

**North  
Central  
Regional  
Transit  
District**

## News from



## Rio Metro Regional Transit District

### Rail Safety Week Activities

Rio Metro and the New Mexico Rail Runner Express recognized Rail Safety Week in September with a comprehensive campaign. Some of the campaign highlights included:



- Red Out for Rail Safety Day:** Train crew and staff members wore red on Friday, September 22 and had their pictures taken for a collage that was shared on social media.
- Rail Safety Day at the Santa Fe Railyard:** Rio Metro staff members collaborated with New Mexico Operation Lifesaver, Sky Railway, and the Santa Fe Railyard Community Corporation to have a rail safety information booth at the Santa Fe Grower's and Artists Market.

- Rail Safety Video:** Rail Runner Engineers and Conductors lent their talents to a 30-second video spot that features safety tips and is being run on Effectv cable stations across New Mexico.
- Transit Safety Pledge:** Rio Metro encouraged passengers and the public to take the Operation Lifesaver, Inc. Transit Safety Pledge by placing the pledge on the homepage of the website as well as doing a site-wide website pop-up throughout the week.

In addition to the efforts listed above, Rio Metro shared daily safety posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter from September 18-24, placed ads in area newspapers, and shared information on the Rail Runner digital monitors as well as at train station kiosks.

Visit [www.riometro.org/railsafetyweek](http://www.riometro.org/railsafetyweek) to learn more and watch the video.

### Pedestrian Safety Month

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/](http://www.riometro.org/) awards to learn more.

### Special Train Service for Popular NM Events

Rio Metro and the Rail Runner partnered with popular local events this summer and fall to provide special train service. Whether it was adding extra trains or reserving specific cars, the Rail Runner provided service for the following events:

- International Folk Art Market
- NM Law Enforcement Memorial Ride
- Burning of Zozobra
- Day of the Tread

In addition to the events listed above, an extra northbound train was provided for NM Governor Bill Richardson's memorial service in Santa Fe in September, and all train service was free on that day.



## Peer Recognition

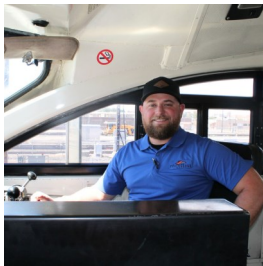
The Mid-Region Council of Governments, Rio Metro Regional Transit District, and NM Workforce Connection recognized four employees this year during an annual luncheon for staff and board members. Each employee was nominated by one or more of their peers in recognition of their hard work and dedication, and each was given a day off as well as a goodie bag. This year's Peer Recognition Award Winners are:

- Payton Showalter, Planner II, Mid-Region Council of Governments
- Lisa Sedillo, Senior Customer Service Representative, Rio Metro Admin/Rail

- Michelle Harrison, Program Support Coordinator/Clerk, Rio Metro Bus
- Twila Sanchez, Quality Assurance Specialist, NM Workforce Connection



## Crew Member Highlight: Locomotive Engineer Jerome Armijo



It's usually dark when Jerome Armijo arrives at the railyard in Downtown Albuquerque. The first thing he does is get into uniform – a blue collared polo shirt and hat. Then he heads

over to the crew room. Armijo, a Locomotive Engineer for the New Mexico Rail Runner

Express, often starts his day at 3:30 a.m. He arrives at work a full hour early to perform inspections, safety checks, and more to ensure the train is safe and ready for passengers on that early morning run. In September, Rio Metro featured Armijo in its monthly blog post titled A Day in the Life of an NMRX Engineer. Read the full post at [www.riometro.org/blog](http://www.riometro.org/blog).



News from



South West Transit Association

# 2024 SWTA Annual Conference and Expo

Tulsa, OK

February 3—7, 2024

Registration Opens November 2023



For more information visit:

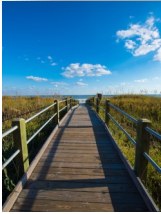
<https://www.swta.org/2024-swta-annual-conference-and-expo-copy/>



## Upcoming National RTAP Technical Assistance Conference in Myrtle Beach



5<sup>th</sup> National RTAP Conference  
**Navigating the Tides of Change  
 with Rural & Tribal Transit**  
 December 3-6, 2023 in Myrtle Beach, SC



Get ready for National RTAP's **5th Technical Assistance Conference: Navigating the Tides of Change with Rural & Tribal Transit**, which will take place on December 3-6, 2023 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Pre-conference training will be held on December 3, and includes an array of courses on topics such as financial management, state program oversight, grant writing, marketing and advocacy, service design for rural systems and intercity routes, and more. That evening there will be a Welcome Reception at the hotel.

The conference will begin Monday, December 4 with a South Carolina welcome and a keynote by John Martin, President and CEO of the Southeastern Institute of Research, Inc. on navigating changing trends in ridership, employment, and demographics, as well as generational differences. This will help us better understand the present and plan for the future. The lunchtime keynote will be delivered by Donna Griggs, Founder and CEO of Propel Change Global, on leadership and strategic planning to navigate change. During lunch on Tuesday, December 5, there will be a keynote by Veronica Vanterpool, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The training opportunities at this conference are too many to be listed but be assured that there is something for everyone. There will be sessions with guidance on drug and alcohol testing, civil rights, and procurement compliance; critical topics like cybersecurity, safety, and driver retention; workshops on conflict resolution and preparing for electric vehicles; and examples of innovative transportation partnerships, service design, and technology implementations.

In addition, we are offering two trainings in conjunction with our conference. The National Transit Institute (NTI)'s training on Rural National Transit Database (NTD) Reporting will

be held on December 7. The Transportation Safety Institute (TSI)'s 2.5-day SMS Principles for Transit training will be held on December 5-7. Register through National RTAP or through TSI's online registration system.

Other notable features of the conference include the Nights of a Thousand Candles event at Brookgreen Gardens with a sweetgrass braiding art project, additional plenary sessions on Wednesday regarding human trafficking and developing action plans, and roundtable discussions for transit managers, tribal transit, state program managers, intercity bus, and mobility managers.

There are also many opportunities for vendors to participate in the conference, including a Vendor Expo and an additional Bus Expo during our Brookgreen Gardens event. A Rapid-Fire Intro segment will provide exposure for all exhibitors and sponsors. Please see the Vendor Prospectus for details, pricing, and sponsorship opportunities.

Finally, several awards will be given at the conference:

- The Tribal Transit Champions, Agencies, and Capital Projects Awards honor tribal transit innovation, commitment, and best practices. The deadline for nominations was October 20, 2023.
- The Wall of Fame will recognize exemplary rural and tribal transit industry staff for their dedication, innovation, and professionalism. All honorees will be showcased on the wall and the National RTAP website and receive a commendation. Nominations are due November 10, 2023.
- We will also be showcasing student posters on rural transit topics.

For more information, to register, and view the agenda, please visit:

<https://web.cvent.com/event/863f66c0-a66d-4136-9943-de10e9284d61/> summary.

We hope to see you in Myrtle Beach!



## News from



## National Rural Transit Assistance Program



## **Upcoming NMTA Quarterly Training Sessions and Transit Conferences...**

**National Transit Database Reporting That Includes General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) starting in Reporting Year 2023**, presented by Marcy Jaffe, Transnovation Inc., GTFS Data Management Support for National RTAP  
GTFS Builder

**When:** Wednesday, November 15th, 2023

**Where:** DoubleTree by Hilton Santa Fe in Santa Fe, NM

**Opioid Overdose Prevention, Recognition, and Response Training**, presented by Bernie Lieving, MSW Statewide Overdose Prevention Education Coordinator Office of Substance Abuse Prevention, The Lieving Group, LLC and Davina Ne, Presbyterian Community Health

**When:** Exact date and time in January 2024 to be determined

**Where:** Location to be determined

### **More From NMTA...**

Please check [nm-ta.com](http://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](http://nm-ta.com) website .

**Follow us on Social Media:**

**Facebook** @New Mexico Transit Association

**Twitter** @NM\_Transit

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