

Inside this Issue:

News from NMTA	1
News from NMDOT	3
Highlighting A New Mexico Transit Member	4
News from National RTAP	5
Rio Metro RTD	6
ABQ Ride	8
More from NMTA	10
NMTA Board of Directors	11

**NEW
MEXICO
TRANSIT
ASSOCIATION**



NMTA continues to be very busy. NMTA submitted its official request for \$20,000,000 of state funds to leverage federal funds for its member agencies to Governor Lujan Grisham's office in October

2024. The Legislative Committee continues to work with J.D. Bullington, NMTA's Lobbyist, on the Yield to Bus and a state transit fund. NMTA will also be supporting bills related to Assault on Transit Workers penalties for the upcoming 2025 NM Legislative Session (January 21-March 22, 2025).

Melissa Drake, Executive Director, and I attended the New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Committee Conference on October 29-30, 2024. We also attended Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's Symposium on the Future of Transportation in New Mexico on November 18, 2024. As NMTA is diligently working on obtaining a state transit fund, we are realizing the importance to connect transportation to other state entities. In this process, we are seeing that many know about transit but have no idea what all transit does or is capable of. We are finding joining efforts with those in the industry not transit specific is really a benefit for all of us.



It is that time of year again when we are adapting to adjusting our clocks back one hour, which could result in disruption of sleep schedules or daily routines, impact mood and mental health. Below are some recommendations to combat

the negative effects of shorter days:

- Go outside in the morning to get sunlight exposure. This will increase alertness throughout the day
- Consider light therapy by using a light box to counter the effects of decreased light exposure
- Practice good sleep hygiene and maintain your current sleep schedule and daily routines
- Stay physically active
- Track your personal experiences and make necessary adjustments



Fall Driving Tips:

- Stay alert
- Don't drive drowsy
- Watch out for bicyclists, pedestrians, and wildlife
- Drive according to weather conditions
- Check vehicle batteries, belts, hoses, lights
- Check wipers regularly and carry extra windshield-washer fluid
- Inspect the tires and check the tire pressure

Have a safe and happy Holiday Season!

Sincerely,

Liz Carter
NMTA President

HOLIDAY*
GOODWILL Comfort***family**
FUN***reflection**
GIVE***THANKFUL**



News from New Mexico Department of Transportation

News From NM Department of Transportation

Sections 5310 and 5311 Applications

If you are applying for 5310 and/or 5311 funds for FY 2026 (beginning October 1, 2025) please make sure you are scheduled to present your application at the appropriate Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) meetings. RTPO rankings of applications are one of the criteria used to determine program

awards. This time of year is often the last RTPO meeting before applications are evaluated at NMDOT and funding decisions are made. If you have questions or need help, please reach out to Vijay Ummadi at the email and phone number on page 3.

National Transit Database Reporting

NMDOT has kicked off its National Transit Database (NTD) reporting on behalf of rural reporters for the October 2023 – September 2024 reporting year. Our hard deadline to complete the NTD reporting is January 31, 2025. FTA uses our NTD data in the formula that determines our annual rural transportation funding apportionment. Questionable or rejected data is omitted from the formula, resulting in less funding for the state.

Staff will be working with you over the coming months to collect and enter your NTD data and resolve any data flags. Completing your monthly invoicing through September 2024

will generate your year-end performance data, which is a large part of the NTD reporting. NTD also requires data on your fleet size, composition, status, and maintenance. Having your vehicle inventories updated in Blackcat will also help us collect your NTD data.

The FTA NTD website has a link to reference materials that may be useful. These resources include presentations and the 2024 NTD Reporting Manual. The NTD main page is located at:

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd>

and the menu option for Reference Materials is located on the top left side.

NMGo! Vanpool Program Expansion

The NMGo! vanpool program has surpassed 100 active vanpools across the state. Much of this growth is happening in places where employers want reliable, affordable transportation for their employees who are traveling longer distances than rural transit can accommodate. In addition to the NMDOT subsidy, these employers are also offering to cover a portion of the vanpool expenses for riders.

NMGo! subsidizes a portion of the monthly costs for vanpoolers. Since expanding eligibility to the entire state, the NMGo!

program has seen significant growth in the number of passenger trips provided and the number of vans in service. If you know of any employers in your area that might be interested in coordinating a vanpool program for their employees, please contact Delilah (info on page 3) to arrange a meeting with Commute with Enterprise staff to learn more. More information on the program is available at the following link:

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

South Capitol Bus Center

NMDOT has launched a design study to recommend improvements to the South Capitol Bus Center. We have surveyed passengers to identify their needs and priorities, and we will also be working with the other transit operators that use the bus

island. We will be using this information to pursue Federal funding for future improvements. For more information on this project, please contact Delilah Garcia at the email and phone number below.

Rural Microtransit

NMDOT is partnering with UNM to develop microtransit implementation plans for the City of Farmington and Meadow City Express in Las Vegas. This work is the next phase of our microtransit project. We have also identified other transit agencies that have expressed an interest in implementing microtransit, and this initial effort will yield results that can be applied to future efforts.

As a reminder, the Best Practices for Rural Microtransit Study is complete. The study is available at the following link:

https://api.realfile.rtsclients.com/PublicFiles/f260a66b364d453e91ff9b3fedd494dc/5c17efbe-67d3-499e-9769-b35df1ddab63/Report_Best%20Practices%20for%20Rural%20Microtransit_NMDOT_UNM.pdf

The study establishes criteria for successful microtransit in rural areas and highlights rural areas of the state that could sustain a microtransit service based on population and job densities. There is also an interactive map to view these microtransit evaluation criteria for a user-selected area.

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 complete and available at this link:

<https://api.realfile.rtsclients.com/PublicFiles/f260a66b364d453e91ff9b3fedd494dc/4bdeec10-32c3-4c6a-b569-333b1c528c5b/Connect%20New%20Mexico%20-%20State%20of%20the%20System%20Report.pdf>

This will be followed by draft recommendations and a prioritized list of programs and investments report. Please go to www.connectnmstudy.com for more information regarding NMDOT's study and project timeline.

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**Highlighting
New
Mexico
Transit
Members**



**North Central
Regional
Transit
District**

North Central Regional Transit District Receives Prestigious GFOA Awards Honor Marks 9th Consecutive Year to Receive National Accounting Award

Espanola, NM – [Nov. 6, 2024] – The North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) is proud to announce it has received two esteemed awards from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA). The District was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting and the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, recognizing its commitment to transparency, excellence, and effective financial management.

The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting was awarded to NCRTD for its annual comprehensive financial report for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023. This prestigious recognition is awarded to entities that demonstrate a constructive "spirit of full disclosure," clearly communicating their financial narrative. The report was evaluated by an impartial panel and met the rigorous standards set forth by GFOA, making this honor a significant milestone for the District and its management team.

Additionally, NCRTD has received the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, acknowledging its exemplary budget document for the current fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.

This award reflects the dedication of both the governing body and staff to uphold the highest principles of governmental budgeting. To qualify, the budget document must serve as a policy document, a financial plan, an operations guide, and a communications device—all rated "proficient" across fourteen mandatory criteria. The District's successful achievement in these areas illustrates its commitment to effective governance and financial accountability.

"We are honored to receive these awards from GFOA for the ninth consecutive year, which recognizes our dedication to transparency and excellence in financial management," said NCRTD Executive Director Anthony Mortillaro. "These achievements reflect the hard work and commitment of our staff and leadership to serve our community effectively."

The Government Finance Officers Association is dedicated to advancing excellence in government finance through best practices, professional development, and resources for over 22,500 members across North America. The NCRTD is proud to be a part of this commitment to high standards in financial reporting and budgeting.



What's New at National RTAP

National RTAP has a variety of webinars, peer roundtables, and courses that you can look forward to during the upcoming months ahead.



On January 7, 2025, from 2:00-3:00 PM ET, Join transit leaders from the National RTAP Review Board for a LinkedIn Learnalong on succession planning. Participants will watch instructional videos and engage in a discussion

on LinkedIn with our co-moderators on best practices and lessons learned. The session will be co-moderated by Kari Banta, Texas DOT; Stephanie Bushong, Ketchikan Gateway Borough Transit; Carolyn Freitag, North Carolina DOT; Marianna Hanefeld, Washington DOT; and Kevin Wassom, Michigan DOT. Please RSVP.

Our Books in Transit Discussion Group has selected *The Lost Ticket* by Freya Sampson as its next book to read for our February 20, 2025 meeting from 2:00-3:00 PM ET. The novel is about a man who met a woman on a bus and lost the bus ticket with her phone number on it. For the past sixty years, he's ridden the same bus trying to find her. It's an uplifting story that makes you think about how important a bus ride can be. Please RSVP.



Every week, we offer Office Hours for two of our technology tools,

GTFS Builder and Website Builder. There is no need to register, just join at the time of the meeting.

GTFS Support every Thursday from 1:00-1:30 PM ET. Please email info@nationalrtap.org for more information.



Website Builder Support every Tuesday at 1:00-1:30 PM ET. Please email info@nationalrtap.org for more information.

Please Save the Date for our 6th National RTAP Conference, which will be held in Austin, Texas between December 7-12, 2025. As we release more information, you will find it at <https://www.nationalrtap.org/News/Conference>



We've launched or updated many of our products recently, including a completely revamped Marketing Transit Toolkit, a new Driver Retention Best Practices Spotlight Article, and a new Directory of Grant Writers. If you have any questions about any of our trainings, please don't hesitate to reach out to us at info@nationalrtap.org.

News from



National Rural Transit Assistance Program

News from



Rio Metro Regional Transit District

Community Partnerships & Events

Rio Metro continued its partnerships with several local organizations this year, making it easier and more enjoyable for community members to attend popular local events. From promoting local sports to celebrating traditions, Rio Metro's community partnerships highlight the importance of accessible transportation and unity in New Mexico. Here's a look at three recent events.

- **Rail Runner Hosts New Mexico United U-23 Team**

Ahead of their July match in Santa Fe, the New Mexico United U-23 soccer team took the Rail Runner for a spirited trip to the game. This partnership showcased the ease of travel between cities and underscored Rio Metro's commitment to supporting local sports teams as well as New Mexico United's commitment to community.

- **Special Service for the Burning of Zozobra**

Rio Metro provided special train service for one of New Mexico's most beloved traditions, the annual Burning of Zozobra in Santa Fe. This event draws thousands of people each year, and the Rail Runner played an essential role in reducing traffic and providing a safe, reliable transportation option for attendees.

Updated Rail Runner Schedule



Rio Metro released an updated New Mexico Rail Runner Express train schedule on October 7, 2024. In addition to a few modified timepoints, a Friday late-night southbound train between Santa Fe and Albuquerque was added,



- **Halloween Fun with Day of the Tread**

In the spirit of Halloween and Día de los Muertos, Rio Metro teamed up with Day of the Tread for a family-friendly bicycle ride to promote fitness and community connection. Participants in the 12-mile Rail Runner Family Fun Ride enjoyed scenic views and a festive atmosphere, capped off by a train ride.

providing passengers with a convenient option to enjoy dinner, see a show, or explore the city without worrying about the drive home.

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

Rail and Pedestrian Safety Campaigns

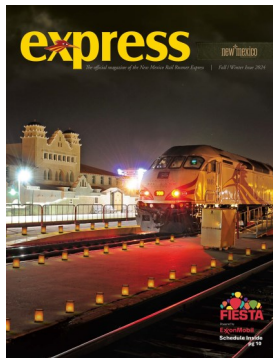
Each fall, Rio Metro hosts two important safety campaigns to protect New Mexico's residents. "See Tracks, Think Train Week" in September raised awareness around rail safety with public messaging, information tables, and a special day where Rail Runner staff and crew members wore red to promote rail safety education. This initiative served as a reminder to stay alert around tracks and trains. Additionally, during Pedestrian Safety Month in October, Rio Metro partnered with the Mid-Region Council of Governments on an educational effort aimed at improving safety for pedestrians and vulnerable road users, sharing safety tips on social media, the Rio Metro website, and beyond.

Visit www.riometro.org/railsafetyweek and www.riometro.org/pedestriansafetymonth for more information.



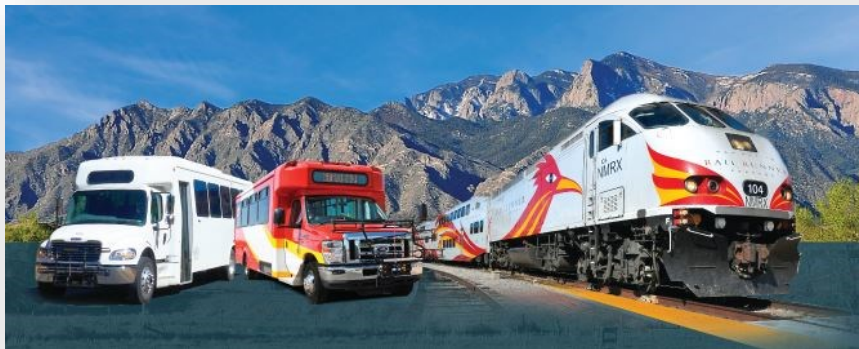
Express Magazine Fall/Winter Issue Released

The latest issue of Express, the official magazine of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express, was published in September. The Fall/Winter issue is filled with everything passengers need to know about riding the train, including schedules, fares, a system map, and bus connections. It also includes a calendar of special events happening during the



season, as well as a passenger profile, crew member profile, and timely features about New Mexico's art and culture. Pick up a copy at Albertsons and CVS in Albuquerque and Santa Fe as well as on the train, or

Visit www.riometro.org/expressmagazine.



News from

ABQRIDE

ABQ RIDE



City of Albuquerque

Next Stop: ABQ RIDE Updates

See Something, Say Something!



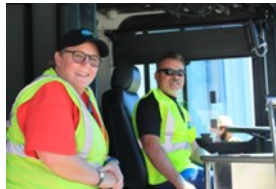
If you see something in the transit system, Say something! ABQ RIDE is now using a real-time reporting app to provide a quick response to safety issues in part of a layered approach to transit safety, which includes a safety partnership with APD, Metro Security, and Contract Security, as well as cleanliness efforts and an updated Rules to Ride.

Download the free See Say app for easy and discreet reporting at bus stops, transit centers, and on buses. Report anything from trashed bus stops, to broken bus signs, to vandalism, or someone disobeying the Rules to Ride. Together, we can make the transit system safer!

Download the App: <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/safety/see-say-app>

New Hires Now Get FREE CDL Training and Testing

ABQ RIDE is approved by the State of New Mexico to administer in-house CDL exams. With this designation, the department is streamlining the training process for incoming staff who need a CDL to drive buses or maintain the fleet. New hires benefit from a \$5,000+ training and testing value in addition to their regular pay and benefits.



“By owning this process, ABQ RIDE is lowering the barrier to entry for driver, servicer, and mechanic recruitment,” said Transit Director Leslie Keener. “We want our new employees to keep money in their pockets without unnecessary financial strain.”

ABQ RIDE is the only City department without a CDL requirement upon hire and the first City department to receive this State certification.

There are now 10 Third-Party Testers in New Mexico.

“ABQ RIDE now offers the whole training package,” said Training Division Manager Shaun Gibson, “We want to facilitate topnotch

training that prepares our staff to safely navigate their roles in this department.”

Learn more about ABQ RIDE’s hiring incentives and available jobs:

<https://www.cabq.gov/transit/opportunities/hiring>

TRANSIT

ONE
ALBUQUE
RQUE

Onboarding New Passenger Counting Tech

ABQ RIDE replaced old fareboxes for counting riders with new automatic passenger counters (APCs). As of July 1, 2024, the City's transit system is collecting ridership data using APCs.



The new data collection method shows that in July, August, and September, ridership reached its highest numbers since March of 2020 when the pandemic began.

"Getting this more accurate picture of how many folks are actively using our transit system will allow us to further improve service, safety, and efficiency," said Mayor Tim Keller. "The fact there are so many choosing to ride our city's buses shows we're on the right track to build back our transit system."

APCs mark a historic shift from traditional fareboxes. When the City purchased the Albuquerque Bus Company in 1964, founding ABQ RIDE, the transit system featured metal boxes next to the driver to collect fares. These boxes were manually emptied daily by a Vault Puller. In recent years, fareboxes counted passengers upon fare collection. Since the implementation of Zero Fares, ABQ RIDE has relied on manual driver counts of passengers.

This APC technology, purchased from Urban Transportation Associates, allows ABQ RIDE to step into the future of data collection with the ability to evaluate productivity of particular stops or route segments for future service planning.



Urgently Hiring Mechanics and Drivers



Working at ABQ RIDE provides unbeatable benefits, free in-house CDL testing, and new hiring incentives for drivers and mechanics ranging from \$500-\$5,000. Please direct determined and hard-working individuals to apply for a role at the City to fast-track their ride to retirement.

Information on Hiring Incentives: <https://www.cabq.gov/transit/opportunities/hiring>

Up Next

- November 29: Buy Luminaria Tour Tickets on Black Friday
- December 5: Take ABQ RIDE to the Nob Hill Shop & Stroll
- December 14: Watch ABQ RIDE's 1927 Antique Bus at the Twinkle Light Parade
- December 14 & 15: Enjoy a free park-and-ride to the Railyards Holiday Market from the Zoo to the Railyards from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- December 24: Luminaria Tour

Holiday schedules, inclement weather updates, upcoming events, and more can be found on [ABQRIDE.com](https://www.abqrider.com).



Upcoming NMTA Quarterly Training Sessions and Transit Conferences...

Save the Date:

Quarterly Training Sessions

- Drug and Alcohol Program Manager training—Date to be announced
- Defensive Driving— April 10th, 2025
- Dispatch—Date to be announced

Indoor Bus Rodeo, Conference and Expo

- Indoor Bus Rodeo: March 15th—16th, Rio Rancho Event Center
- NM Transit Conference and Expo: March 17th—18th, Santa Ana Star Casino and Hotel

If you have a training suggestion, please contact Melissa Drake at mdrake@nm-ta.com.

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

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!

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