



NMTA Winter 2026 Newsletter

News from the NM Transit Association President



Happy Spring NMTA Family!

Board Updates

James Barela, Vice President resigned from the NMTA Board of Directors effective February 28, 2026. I want thank James for everything he has done on behalf of NMTA especially everything he has done to improve the bus roadeo. NMTA is going to miss having you on the Board as well as your perspectives. The Vice President position will remain vacant until the March 30, 2026 Board meeting

At the NMTA February 26, 2026 Board Meeting, the board voted and approved Nick Sofoul from North Central RTD to complete James' remaining term on the board. Congratulations Nick and welcome to the NMTA Board, we look forward to working with you.

[Read More From the NMTA President](#)

News from the NM Transit Association Executive Director

Gallup Coalition Build: Partnering to Protect Youth on Transportation

May is both Youth on Transportation Safety Month and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Month. In recognition of this, please join us for a half-day human trafficking awareness event bringing together local stakeholders, including community transportation leaders, tribal representatives, law enforcement and youth-serving organizations, to facilitate community-wide collaboration on preventing and interrupting youth exploitation.

Hosted in partnership with TAT (Truckers Against Trafficking), this event is designed to strengthen partnerships and equip participants with tools and resources to help safeguard youth within their communities. This event is free to attend, but registration is required.

Register here:

YOU'RE INVITED PROTECTING YOUTH FROM TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION IN THE FOUR CORNERS

May is Youth on Transportation Safety Month and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Month



Page, AZ
Youth on Transportation Coalition Build
10AM-2PM



Gallup, NM
Youth on Transportation Coalition Build
10AM-2PM



Ignacio, CO
MMIR Walk/Run w. Mobile Exhibit Tours
6AM-4PM



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MORE INFO



Questions? Email info@tatnonprofit.org



News from NM Department of Transportation



Staff Updates

We are happy to announce the following additions to the Transit Bureau Team:

Alexis Corning-Padilla returns to the Bureau in a new role as the Transit Planning and Service Coordination Manager. Working directly with the NMGo! Vanpool Program, NMDOT Park & Ride, MPOs and Transit Planning and Research Projects. Alexis can be reached at:
alexiscorning.padil@dot.nm.gov

Stephen Dimitriou is new to the NMDOT and will fill the role of Program Manager supporting the Rural Transit Programs with a focus on discretionary funding projects, procurement and capital improvement projects. Stephen can be reached at:
stephen.dimitriou@dot.nm.gov

[Read more NMDOT Updates](#)

Highlighting New Mexico Transit Members



South Central Regional Transit District Celebrates 10 Years of Service and Launches Senior Van Pool Program

The South Central Regional Transit District (SCRTD) proudly celebrates ten years of providing safe, reliable, and accessible public transportation to the communities of southern New Mexico and the El Paso border region.

Since its founding in 2016, SCRTD has grown from a modest operation into a vital regional transit provider serving multiple municipalities, connecting rural and urban communities, and expanding access to employment, education, healthcare, and essential services. Over the past decade, SCRTD has strengthened regional mobility through strategic route expansions, enhanced service frequency, fleet modernization, and innovative infrastructure investments — including zero-emission vehicles and clean energy initiatives.

As part of this milestone year, SCRTD is also excited to announce the launch of its new Senior Van Pool Program, which provides reliable, scheduled transportation for senior residents in the Santa Teresa area. This program addresses a critical mobility gap by providing safe, comfortable transportation tailored for seniors who may not have consistent access to personal vehicles.

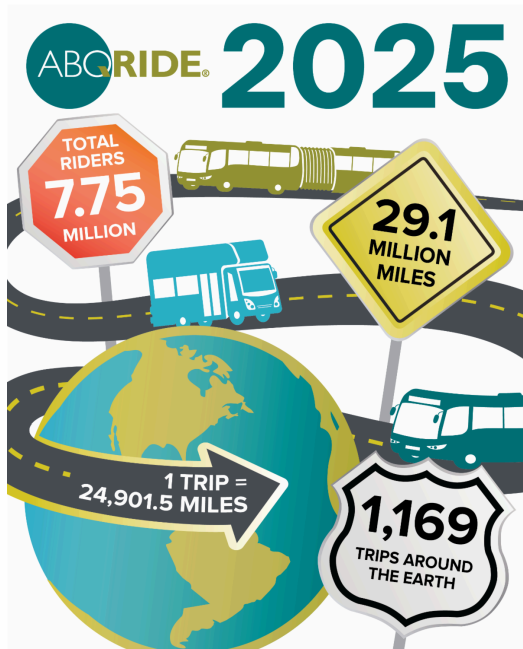
The Senior Van Pool Program reflects SCRTD's continued commitment to meeting community needs through responsive and equitable transit solutions. By working closely with local partners and residents, the District ensures that transportation remains a bridge to opportunity and independence.

"Reaching our ten-year milestone is a testament to the dedication of our staff, board members, regional partners, and the communities we serve," said David Armijo, Executive Director of SCRTD. "As we look toward the future, we remain focused on expanding access, improving service levels, and investing in sustainable transportation solutions."

As SCRTD enters its next decade, the District remains committed to innovation, regional collaboration, and delivering mobility solutions that strengthen the communities of southern New Mexico.

For more information about SCRTD services, visit www.scrtd.org.





Ridership Climbs

ABQ RIDE's 2025 ridership count is in and totals nearly 8 million rides.

The 2025 data shows:

- Increase of 360,000+ rides over 2024 (5% increase).
- Increase of 785,000+ rides over 2023 (11% increase).
- Average of 28 people served per vehicle service hour.
- Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) accounts for 31% of overall public transit service.
- 29,104,000 total passenger miles, which equates to 1,169 times around the earth.

In December of 2025, ABQ RIDE launched the first phase of ABQ RIDE Forward, a generational update to city bus routes tailored to evolving rider needs and travel patterns. ABQ RIDE Forward will drive the city's transit system back up to pre-2019 levels of bus service over a multiyear implementation. Each phase will bring more flexible and frequent service to the community, including more weekend and evening buses. Full implementation of the plan will fill 117 driver vacancies and add 28 buses and 20 mechanics to the transit system, bringing more than 3,600 weekly hours of bus service to Albuquerque.

"We've reached a point where our staffing allows us to grow and improve," said Transit Director Leslie Keener. "ABQ RIDE Forward means more buses, expanded hours, and better connections, especially during evenings and weekends. With upgraded routes and more reliable arrival times, it's easier for people to get where they need to go."

ABQ RIDE Forward is fueled by community feedback and guided by world-class consultancy, Jarrett Walker + Associates. Paired with the new route network and anticipated ridership increases in 2026, is the implementation

Learn more: cabq.gov/rideforward

Two Marketing Campaigns Launch to Promote Ridership & Safety

ABQ RIDE is launching two new campaigns in 2026.

Come With Us & Ride the Bus! began in January with the goal of getting people back on buses. The campaign invites the Albuquerque public to try the new ABQ RIDE given its recent upgrades. The campaign promotes improved service, safety, reliability, frequency, and sanitation.

“Our City’s public transit system is an amazing free resource,” said Mayor Tim Keller. “A lot has changed and improved, so I hope folks will give buses another try.”



Come with Us & Ride the Bus! **ABQRIDE.**



Drive Safe, Ride Safe launches in the spring to increase transit safety starting internally. The campaign includes a commitment from all transit managers to encourage safe practices among staff, a department-wide survey to gauge safety perceptions, assembling a new safety committee, monthly safety audits, safety talks and modernized training, and tangible safety solutions based on survey feedback. The hope is for the internal culture of safety to then permeate to passengers and local drivers.

The campaign also provides helpful safety tips for bus passengers, bus drivers, and local drivers to actively participate in their safety and the safety of others. Both campaigns are promoted through organic marketing, paid advertising, strategic media collaborations, systemwide signage in bus shelters, transit centers, and on buses, social media videos, and more.

Learn more: cabq.gov/ridethebus



News from Rio Metro Regional Transit District

Spring Semester Bus Service to UNM-Valencia Campus

Rio Metro is providing free bus service to UNM-Valencia for the Spring 2026 semester. The Route 209 bus runs Monday through Thursday between the Los Lunas Rail Runner Station



and the UNM-Valencia Campus through May 14, 2026. This special schedule offers staff and students a convenient way to get to campus. Visit www.riometro.org/bus-schedules to learn more and view the schedule.

Celebrating Our Outstanding Employees

Each year, the Mid-Region Council of Governments recognizes an outstanding employee from each of its divisions. The Peer Recognition Awards celebrate staff members who demonstrate a high level of dedication and whose impact is felt throughout their department or organization. Employees are nominated by their peers and celebrated during an annual event at the end of the year. In 2025, the following individuals were recognized:

- Julian Lucero, Transit Operator, Rio Metro Bus (Sandoval County)
- Guadalupe “Lupe” Maltos, Transit Administrative Assistant, Rio Metro Rail
- Yvonne Perez, Transit Dispatcher, Rio Metro Bus (Valencia County)

Their contributions play an important role in delivering safe, reliable transportation to the



Late Night Train Service for the Santa Fe Opera

Rio Metro and the Santa Fe Opera are once again partnering to provide train and shuttle service for all Friday and Saturday Opera performances in July and August 2026 (except July 4). The transportation package costs \$25 per person and includes round-trip Rail Runner service between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and shuttle service to and from the Opera. This ongoing collaboration helps expand access to world-class arts while showcasing the convenience of public transportation. Visit www.riometro.org/opera to learn more.

Santa at the Station Event Recap

Families from across central New Mexico gathered at the Montañito Rail Runner Station on December 12, 2025 for Rio Metro's Santa at the Station celebration. The festive evening featured entertainment, holiday crafts, ornament-making, and other family-friendly activities. Attendees also had the opportunity to take photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, creating memorable holiday moments. In the spirit of the season, Rio Metro partnered with Roadrunner Food Bank of New Mexico to collect non-perishable food donations during the event. Thanks to the generosity of attendees, a total of 265 pounds of food was donated to help support individuals and families in need throughout the community. Visit www.flickr.com/photos/riometro to view pictures from the event.



News from National Rural Transit Assistance Program

Does procurement mystify you? There's a course for that!

As everyone knows, transit agencies that receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding must comply with FTA and other federal and state procurement regulations. This is true for anything the agency purchases or contracts for - vehicles and equipment, maintenance and repairs, materials and supplies, computer technology, professional services, construction, etc. While the regulations and guidance in documents such as the FTABest Practices Procurement Manual and Comprehensive Review Contractor's Manual explain everything that is required to complete a procurement, reading through lengthy and detailed regulatory documents can be daunting, to say the least.

[See National RTAP Resources Here!](#)



NMTA Board of Directors

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