

Bulletin Board / Members in Action

Newsletter Production Update

I will be out of town Labor Day weekend so the deadline for material submission for the September Issue will be Sunday August 30th.

Our thanks to Montebello Transit General Manager Aurora Jackson for a lively presentation at our July meeting.

Denny Zane, executive director of Move LA, will speak at our August 8th meeting on the subject of public transportation funding.

The Fullerton Railway Plaza Association has now finished filing papers for its new

name, the Southern California Railway Plaza Association (<http://scrmf.org/>). They are actively seeking a new site for railroad days and hope to revive it in 2010.

There is now a website for the effort to bring a streetcar to Broadway in downtown Los Angeles: <http://lastreetcar.org/>

Metro has finally started posting the agendas (albeit only the current one) of its Accessibility Advisory Committee on the agency website: <http://www.metro.net/accessible/default.htm> 🚇 🚇 🚇

We had a booth at the Clean-Air Car Show & Green-Living Expo in South Pasadena on July 26th. Staffing the booth were Kymberleigh Richards, John Ulloth, Lionel Jones, and Hank Fung. Visitors included Ken Ruben and Warren Quon.

Andrew Novak attended the City of Downey Transit Fair on July 16th.

Ken Ruben attended the July 13th meeting of the San Gabriel Valley Sector Governance Council and the July 8th Culver CityBus outreach meetings at both 2 pm and 6 pm.

Mark Panitz was also at the 2 pm meeting. Mr. Ruben read into the record SOCATA's statement of support for the fare proposals and our suggestion they consider offering a day pass.

Ruben also attended the July 22nd meeting of the Metro Citizens Advisory Council and the Metro Board Meeting on July 23rd. Kymberleigh Richards and Bart Reed were also among those who attended the Metro Board Meeting on July 23rd.

Some weeks ago, Dana Gabbard, Executive Secretary, received an e-mail from member Kevin Korell who is the team leader for the railfan website:

<http://www.on-track-on-line.com/>

In the message Korell and his group invited residents of Southern California to join them when they came to our area in late July to ride local rail transit. Among the SOCATA members who joined them either on their Metro rides and/or Metrolink rides were Dave Snowden, John Ulloth, Mina Nichols and Ken Ruben. Gabbard also facilitated the group getting in contact with a reporter for the Downtown News who joined them on July 20 for some Metro subway rides resulting in an article ("Trains of Thought") published in the Downtown News' July 27th issue. 🚇 🚇 🚇

We encourage members to regularly check the calendar on our website

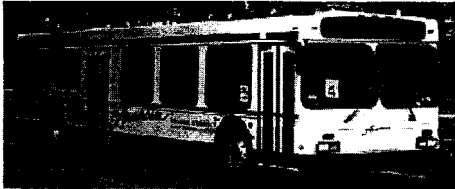
<http://socata.net/calendar.htm>

Transit Updates

Anaheim Resort Transit

On July 29th, MV Transportation took over the Anaheim Resort Transit (ART) contract. Previous operator, Coach America, gave up the contract after they failed to reach an agreement with ART over monies owed.

For fare and schedule info: www.rideart.org



Cerritos on Wheels

From July 1st through August 31st Cerritos on Wheels (COW) will operate on a reduced summer schedule. COW vehicles will arrive at each bus stop in 70 minute intervals on weekdays, rather than the regular 30 minute interval schedule. The 30 minute interval service will resume on September 1st. The implementation of a reduced summer schedule reflects a decrease in ridership demand during the summer months.

Culver CityBus

On August 24th, Culver City bus fares will be going up. Base fare will now be \$1.00. Local transfers will now be 25¢ and Inter-agency Transfers will now be 40¢.

Students fares will now be 75¢ and senior/disabled will be 35¢. for seniors and disabled riders. Senior/disabled local transfers will be 10¢ and Inter-agency will be 20¢.

On September 14th, Culver City Line 7 will go from a 40 minute headway to a 60 minute headway to improve transfers connections with Metro Line 220.

Flyaway

On August 1st, the Los Angeles World Airports (LAWA) raised the fares on the Flyaway bus service. The one way fare on both the Union Station and Van Nuys lines are now \$7.00 person and Westwood is now \$5.00. Employee Monthly passes are \$120.000 and children under 6 are free.

Also on August 1st, the Van Nuys service will only accept credit and debit cards as payment.

LAWA is also considering stating a line from LAX to Irvine that could start as early as November.

Long Beach Transit

Has opened a new Transit Information Center at 130 E. 1st Street, Southeast corner of 1st Street & Pine Avenue at the Long Beach Transit Mall.

This new location replaces the old transit information center. Aside from bus stop sales the new facility also has a real-time transit schedule display, a public restroom, lost and found service, and a 24-hour touch screen transit information kiosk.

Hours for the new center are 7 am to 6 pm Monday thru Thursday and 9 am to 7 pm on Friday thru Sunday. The restrooms are open 7 days-a-week 5 am to 1:30 am.



Transit and Visitor Information Center
Click here to learn more.

(Continued on Page 4)

Transit Updates Continued

Pasadena ARTS

On July 1st, Pasadena ARTS raised their local fare to 75¢ for adults, 50¢ for students, and 35¢ for seniors and disabled riders. Local transfers will be free and interagency transfers will be 25¢.

Riverside Transit Agency

On July 27th, the Route 206 Hopper will not operate at the Corona N. Main Metrolink Station due to the opening of the new parking structure. Routes 3 and 206 will resume their regular drop off and pick up

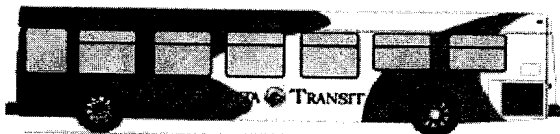
Route 206 Hopper was a temporary service that operated to an off-site parking lot used during the parking structure construction.

Santa Clarita Transit

On August 2nd, Santa Clarita Transit implemented several changes to both their local and express bus service.

- New morning trips were added to both Lines 3 and 4.
- New Line 757 from Santa Clarita to the North Hollywood Red Line station began.
- Service to Sylmar Metrolink on Line 8 was discontinued.
- Station Link Lines 503 and 504 were discontinued.
- Express Lines 747, 793, and 798 were also discontinued.

Service on Line 757, the "NoHo Express" will be free until August 16th. Santa Clarita is offering the free fare to get riders used to the new service.

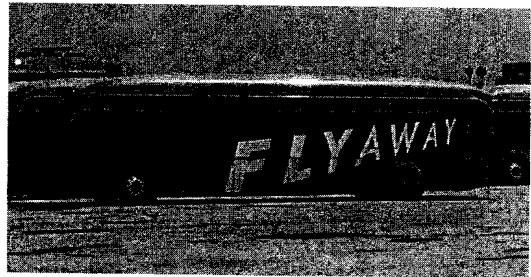


New Buses on the way

Foothill Transit has begun placing 30 42-foot NABI BRT buses in service through out the San Gabriel Valley. These new buses are numbered in the F1700 series, presumably F1700-F1729.

Over the summer and fall, Omnitrans will begin placing 27 new New Flyer C40LFRs in service in San Bernardino. These buses will be numbered in the 1200 series, presumably 1201-1227.

Los Angeles World Airports has also taken delivery of several new 42-foot NABI BRT buses. These buses maybe used on the proposed LAX to Irvine service.



Marina del Rey WaterBus

Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe announced that the county sponsored WaterBus in Marina del Rey has carried 13,154 since the summer-only service began in June. At this time last year the service had carried 6,995 riders.

The service operates Fridays 5:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m., Saturdays 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 a.m., and Sundays from 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Holiday WaterBus service is available on Labor Day, September 7th from 11:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Tickets are available at each boarding location for \$1.00 per person, one-way. Season passes are available for purchase at the Fisherman's Village location for \$30.00.



2008 Day After Thanksgiving Trip by Dana Gabbard

Continued from last month...

One concern we had is Woody Rosner had been a no show. He had just the day before spoke of his plans to join us and had purchased tickets with Amtrak for our planned return that evening from Carpinteria. But attempts to contact him to see if he had overslept were unsuccessful.

http://www.toaks.org/government/depts/public_works/transportation/center.asp

Soon we were at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center--whose amenities include a depot with seating inside for waiting transit users, along with pay phones. One person boarded here. Spotted was a 101 Highway Express also going northbound.

The roadside scenery was very upscale, with many malls and even some golf courses testifying to the lavish lifestyle of the inhabitants. It was a beautiful sunny day, with only a few light clouds in the sky. We pulled into Pardee Plaza, a mall serving Camarillo. Now we learned why the one person who boarded in Thousand Oaks took our bus and not the 101 Express as he got off here. The 101 highway express that we saw bypasses this stop. The bus stop includes a information cube on the sign pole, along with a shelter and a bench.

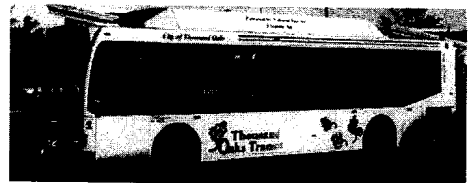
We continued on to the Camarillo Metrolink Station where two got off while one got on. The bus then continued along Ventura Bl., a frontage road to the 101. We passed a plethora of fast food places (IHOP, Jack in the Box, Carl's Jr.) plus so many places to shop it seemed like a shopper's paradise. At another shopping center, Paseo Camarillo, 3 got on including one with a bike. The stop was adjacent to Constitution Park, with a Veteran's memorial on the corner that had a flag wav-

ing above it. How upscale was the area? I spotted a Barney's New York in the Outlet mall--about as exclusive of a clothier as is possible (they have stores in Beverly Hills, Las Vegas, Madison Ave., etc.)! At Esplanade Dr. a passenger got off who had so many bags of stuff with him the driver helped get them off. Turns out the guy had a car parked in a lot adjacent to the stop and after loading his bags in the trunk jumped in and zipped off. Soon after we passed a Super Thrift Shop just before arriving at 8:52 a.m. at the Oxnard Transportation Center.

Some ducked in for a quick snack or bathroom break in the depot while others went to the Gold Coast Transit ticket office to purchase a day pass (which aren't sold aboard the buses, only at sales outlets).

At 9 a.m. we boarded route 1B, a New Flyer #4021 with 4 passengers. As we began it was noticed this driver was very conscientious about calling the stops. At 8th St. one boarded. At Wooley Rd. one got off while one got on. At Hill St. another person boarded. We continued through a residential area to a short layover at the C Street Transfer Center, a meeting place for bus routes adjacent to the Centerpoint Mall that has street side benches and shelters. We noted despite the recent name change of the agency that the bus stop signs and the shoulder patch on the bus driver's uniforms both still said "SCAT". Resuming our run, at Bard Rd. 2 got off.

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Public and Legislative Affairs By Dana Gabbard

I sat on the Plans & Programs Technical Advisory Committee of the Southern California Association of Governments <http://www.scag.ca.gov/pptac/> for the last two cycles of the drafting of the Regional Transportation Plan. This required taking a half day off from work once a month or so. The process is very slow with low attendance initially. As deadlines loom the pace becomes frantic with meetings occurring twice a month as attendance grows and it all becomes a blur. Some of the presentations were informative, others tedious.

After the last Plan started its move to approval the Committee stopped meeting in early 2008. It now appears SCAG has decided for this new round to curtail technical input by academics and non-profits -- the Auto Club seems to be the only non public entity left on the Committee. Well, I see this as a good jumping off point for my involvement. Plus we can always ask for a presentation when the 2012 RTP is being finalized to offer our input...

Can anyone explain why the I will ride folks are so exercised about trying to get the Gold Line Foothill Extension to jump ahead of Expo phase II for funding? It isn't going to happen and in any case the extension to Azusa is next in line after Expo, which actually is a great place to be positioned. They seriously need to stop raising false hopes.

Damien Newton on L.A. Streetsblog (<http://la.streetsblog.org/>) quoted me in the post "Metro Board Preview: LRTP, AnsaldoBreda, Silver Line and Tolls" about the shortcomings of the current process for Metro's preparation of its draft Long Range Plan: "...previous Plan preparation included convening stakeholder groups to provide input while the draft plan was being formulated and a round of public

meetings in the region (held in the evenings) on the draft plan were conducted seeking input. This current plan has had minimal to no substantive means by which to comment.

A poorly publicized hearing held during a weekday in downtown L.A. falls far short of what used to be common practice. That said, I should note the old way of doing things still mostly resulted in what you would expect they planned to do anyway, so I am not claiming it was paradise or some such. But at least the niceties were observed."

Obscure entity of the month: Public Infrastructure Advisory Commission, formed by the state to assist Caltrans and regional transportation agencies in developing public-private financing agreements for high-priority infrastructure projects. They even have a website:

<http://www.publicinfrastructure.ca.gov/>

I was impressed at the candor Aurora Jackson of Montebello Transit showed at our July meeting, especially her admission that they are joining TAP mostly to have a seat at the table to hopefully help fix it. She is especially opposed to the \$2 charge for the cards. P.S. - she found out about Metro line 632 (the Gold Line extension substitute bus) from the announcement on our website! YEOW!

I'll conclude by noting Julie Austin was recently brought in as Director of Policy & Strategic Planning for the North County Transit District. She used to be Foothill's Executive Director and thus has invaluable knowledge to assist the agency if they go forward with contracting operations, as they seem poised to do. Contracting is not the sort of thing you want to undertake where you learn how to do it as you go along. Well, we'll see how it all plays out. 🚗 🚘 🚙

Recent Legislation

Senate Committees Pass Authorization Extension

The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, chaired by Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-CA), and the Senate Banking Committee, chaired by Sen. Chris Dodd (D-CT), both passed an 18-month extension of SAFETEA-LU on July 23. Dodd said of the Public Transportation Programs Extension Act, Although this is an 18 month extension ... I am not ready to concede that we cannot get a bill next year. Ranking Member Richard Shelby (R-AL) added, What we really need is to do the real deal. What we need is certainty, and I would hope we would act before the deadline.

Also in the Senate, the Finance Committee, chaired by Sen. Max Baucus (D-MT), has proposed to transfer \$4.8 billion from the General Fund to the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund.

Washington Forum Focuses on Green Benefits of Public Transit

An APTA-sponsored July 22 forum in Washington, D.C., focused on public transportation's crucial role in addressing climate change. Sens. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Thomas Carper (D-DE) were panelists at the CQ Forum on Climate Change Policy and Transportation, along with Kevin Desmond, general manager of Seattle's King County Metro Transit.

APTA President William Millar in his welcoming address noted that public transportation saves 37 million metric tons of carbon annually, as well as 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline. If we were to make a substantial increase in public transportation, then public transportation could be more available to more people ... and we would save even more, Millar said.

Also on the panel were Jannine Benner, legislative director for Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), and others.

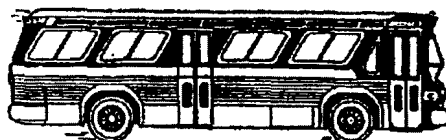
Public Transportation Systems Busy Using ARRA Grants

As the FTA continues to administer American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants, public transit agencies across the nation are putting those funds to work in their communities.

For example, the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission District in Stockton, CA, will use its \$3 million in ARRA funds for maintenance and repairs to the Altamont Commuter Express rail system; the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority in St. Petersburg, FL, received \$15.1 million, which will go toward the purchase of 14 hybrid replacement buses and bus communication devices such as Automated Vehicle Locators with annunciators and real-time passenger information, as well as bus stop improvements.

The \$1 million grant to Link Transit in Wenatchee, WA, will finance the replacement of numerous vehicles in its fleet, including nine minivans for paratransit operations; and the Santa Cruz Metropolitan Transit District in Santa Cruz, CA, will purchase 27 new paratransit vans, fareboxes, and software with its \$5 million ARRA grant. 🚌 🚌 🚌

Go by BUS



2008 Day After Thanksgiving Trip Continued

Now we were entering the Port Hueneme area, passing Bubbling Springs Park and a cluster of apartment complexes in which evidently dwelt the families of the officers and civilian workforce of the nearby Naval Base. Continuing through residential neighborhoods we had 1 person board at Pomona and B Streets, followed by one at Clara/Pomona. Now we passed the building housing the Pt. Hueneme Historical Society Museum and the Chamber of Commerce for the area.

At Mark/Pt. Hueneme Rd. two boarded plus a child. At Surfside 1 got off. Befitting the name of the street you could spot nearby the beach and a Pier. The next landmark we passed was the Dorill B. Wright Cultural Arts Center and a sign proclaiming "Pt. Hueneme Slough". We had an influx of riders boarding at Hueneme Road and Perkins - six plus a child! Then we went by the Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church before entering a commercial district. At Bard Road 5 more (plus two kids) boarded.

Now we had reached the layover. Gold Coast policy is you pay an additional fare to continue on the return trip. Of course, those who had purchased day passes just needed to show it again. Continuing, we passed St. Anthony's Catholic Church which was in the midst of putting up an outdoor nativity scene display. This was followed by our passing through some neat residential areas. We continued with minor on and off boarding until we reached the Oxnard Transportation center where almost everyone deboarded (with a new operator taking over and the 1B became a 6A) and we met up with Ken Ruben.

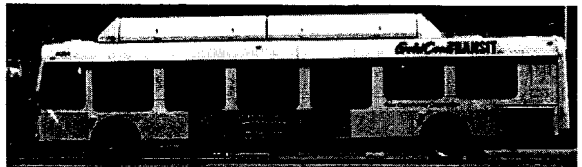
Ken filled us in on his trip via the Surfliner and a Van Hool Thruway with 10 passengers. At C St. and Doris we gained a bike plus 2 got off. Then at Gonzales Road one got on

and one got off. The bus took a diversion to pass by a local EDD office. At the Esplanade 3 got off, then at Wagon Wheel another bike joined us. We continued on the 101, passing over new bridges. After exiting the 101 as we were making our left turn at the corner of Johnson/Telephone we noted a vehicle painted in the new Gold Coast color scheme - teal with gold and tourqueous highlights.

Next we went along a commercial corridor in an upscale area, passing the Gateway Plaza commercial complex followed by Poinsettia plaza where 1 got off while two got on. We originally planned to get off the 6B at the County Government Center and walk a long block to the VISTA Coastal Express layover, but Kymberleigh checked with the operator as we left OTC and learned we would get to Pacific View Mall ahead of the VISTA bus so we stayed on until that location instead. At 11:05 a.m. we arrived at the Pacific View Mall where we deboarded along with six of our fellow passengers.

At this location we met up with Woody Rosner, who missed the Conejo Connection but decided to catch up with us via the Commuter Express 422 connecting with the VISTA 101 at the Thousand Oaks Transportation Center. The Transit Center at the Mall is an excellent location as to amenities--besides shelters and seating it has vending machine that dispense sodas and other liquids, bathrooms, water fountains and even wa wa artworks.

To Be Continued...



Metro Board Report for July 2009 by *Kymberleigh Richards*

No Yvonne Burke, No Fare Gates?: CEO Art Leahy surprised everyone at the Operations committee meeting by announcing that he isn't certain the business plan for the Metro Rail gates, which includes a reduction in the number of fare inspectors, is going to work. Leahy says that in the early stages of the review he has been directed to perform on TAP there has been "no internal consensus" on the issue of station staffing and/or closed circuit video, and in light of that – as well as concerns about delays to passengers at stations due to possible long lines at the gates – he has halted the installation of fare gates (likely until sometime late next year). Which leads us to the ...

Quote Of The Month: Which comes from Leahy in explaining his decision to halt the gate installation: "If we need more inspectors to ensure compliance, do we need the gates?"

Ah, The Things TAPocrats Never Thought Of: In addition to questioning the need for fare gates, Leahy has started questioning why, with the migration of the monthly pass to TAP, the "month" hasn't been turned into a flexible "30-day period" so that the long lines at customer service centers around the end of every month would become shorter lines spread over an entire month. No answer from staff when he brought this up, either in committee, or before the entire Board (and staff had a whole week between the two meetings to formulate an answer) ...

Why The Feds May Be Important To Measure R's Success: Almost hidden inside the Measure R Board workshop staff presentation was a graph showing how the approved projects could be accelerated if more crea-

tive funding mechanisms – such as the "infrastructure bank" concept being tossed around Congress at the moment – are employed. Among the highlights: Expo Line to Santa Monica, 2015; Gold Line to Azusa and Green Line to LAX, 2017; Regional Connector and Gold Line to Whittier, 2018; Purple Line to Fairfax, 2019 and to Century City, 2026.

And The LRTP Gets Punted Again: To the surprise of practically no one, the Board has again deferred approval of the Long Range Transportation Plan ... but this time the reason is legitimately outside of Metro's control: The reason is that the many highway projects added to the LRTP by Measure R do not yet have projected completion dates, because most of the 72 cities who have jurisdiction over the projects are reluctant to provide same and no one – staff included – is happy with the idea of a LRTP with a bunch of "TBD" notations in the completion date column.

And just one more thing (as I channel Detective Columbo), Director José Huizar wants the downtown streetcar added to the strategic (unfunded) plan. This is also delaying the approval of pursuing federal New Starts funding for the Regional Connector and Westside Subway Extension, although that didn't stop Director Mike Antonovich from putting forward an additional motion on the subject that called for a commitment to complete both the Connector and the first phase of the subway (to Fairfax) by 2019 to be part of the New Starts application.

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Metro Board Report Continued

Breda Gotta Da Punt As Well: Despite AnsaldoBreda's latest provision for a \$300 million letter of credit that Metro could draw upon if they continued to miss deadlines, the Board extended the option on the current contract for another 60 days to allow Leahy and staff to further negotiate a way to proceed with Breda (who were accused by Antonovich of dealing "unprofessionally" with Metro staff in what would best be described as a passionate speech of unbridled skepticism).

Not to be outdone, Director Zev Yaroslavsky said point blank that he does not trust Breda, especially in light of public relations releases by their corporate parent that directly contradict the company's statement that their dealings in Iran (as reported in the media) ended more than five years ago. Another sticky problem is that FTA regulations restrict agencies from exercising options on such contracts after five years, and the Breda contract was originally entered into back in 2003. And the drama continues.

High Speed Rail, Phase I: Metro is now officially on-board with support for the California High Speed Rail "first segment" between Union Station and Anaheim, even though it should be obvious that this short a distance isn't going to be significantly faster than existing Metrolink service. But that doesn't mean Metro is suffering from "pie in the sky" syndrome: That segment is within the LOS-SAN corridor; thus any improvements for that segment will benefit such services as the Pacific Surfliner, and this move will facilitate applying for federal funds that are becoming available for the development of high speed rail.

Are Bikes Welcome Or Not?: Adoption of a revised "bike on rail" policy, which incorpo-

rates the changes being made by Metro Rail Operations to provide specific accommodations for same, has been delayed because Antonovich wants a further study regarding why existing policies haven't been enforced and the legal risks involved with allowing not only bikes, but also strollers, luggage and large packages on the system. An interesting conflict has arisen between the Los Angeles City Fire Department, whose liaison reported that they only support two bikes per rail car, and the various bicycle coalitions, who call any restrictions "unnecessary" and decry the "segregation" of their bikes into special areas. I suspect it will be LAFD that wins, not the cyclists.

The Return Of The 9:30 Board Meeting: Incoming Chair Ara Najarian has taken advantage of a procedural loophole of sorts in order to start Board meetings at the announced time: Since general public comment does not require a quorum, Najarian is opting to take same while the rest of the Board wanders in, then proceed with the agenda once they are there and finishing the "non-item specific" comments before going into closed session. Now why didn't his predecessors think of that?

Staff reports on these items, as well as on many other matters of interest, will be available for reading at the August 8th meeting. My column will take a break next month as well, since the regular Board meetings will not be held in August, although if anything of importance transpires at the Board workshop to be held on the 13th, I'll fire up the word processor and report. 🚆 🚆 🚆



City of Downey Transit Fair

On July 16th, the City of Downey sponsored a Transit Fair at the Barbara J. Riley Community Center next to Apollo Park. For the Transit Fair on display was DowneyLink RE 1230, Downey Dial-A-Ride Ford Starcraft Cutaway 6243, and Dial-A-Ride Chevy Van 6242.

City officials were on hand to answer any questions people had about the various transportation services, including Metro, that operate in Downey.

A city tour was being offered to people who attended the Transit Fair. DowneyLink RE 1236 was used for this special tour. The tour took about 20 minutes and included going through downtown Downey, passing city hall, and a drive through of the Downey Depot where all four DowneyLink routes meet.

Handouts and a several freebies were given to the attendees. 🚌 🚌 🚌

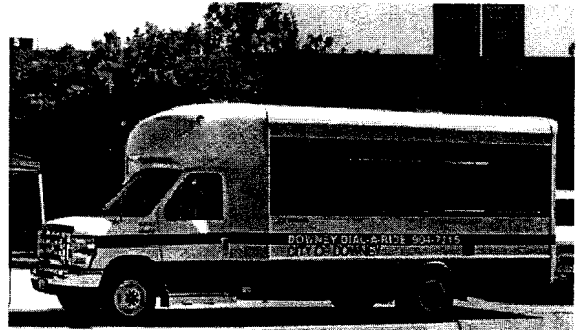


Photo of the month

Golden Empire Transit (Bakersfield) Flexible 4114 in downtown Bakersfield on October 21, 1981. (Bruce Korusek Photo)