

# ***THE TRANSIT ADVOCATE***

Newsletter of the Southern California Transit Advocates  
December 2012 Vol. 20, No. 12



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*Megabus.com Van Hool double-decker in front of  
Union Station*

*—Photo from Megabus.com Facebook page*

ISSN 1525-2892

## ***Bulletin Board / Members in Action***

### **Bulletin Board:**

Our thanks to Macy Neshati (Vice President, Sales & Marketing for Complete Coach Works) for the impressive presentation at our November 10<sup>th</sup> meeting on their 100% electric Zero Emission Propulsion System for remanufactured transit bus and the various aspects of Complete Coach Works business.

At our December meeting, which begins at 1:00 PM, member and newsletter Editor Andrew Novak will show his slide show entitled "Southern California Transit from A to Z Photos from 1998 to 2012." Mr. Novak first presented this show at the 2012 Motor Bus Society Convention in Los Angeles early this year. Afterward Jerard Wright will give us his thoughts on Measure J. We will then have our 2013 board election and this year's election committee consists of Perias Pillay, Dominick Falzone and Andrew Novak.

The candidates are:

President -- Nate Zablen

Vice President -- Kent Landfield

Executive Secretary -- Dana Gabbard

Recording Secretary -- Edmund Buckley

Treasurer -- Dave Snowden

Directors -- Ken Ruben, J.K. Drummond, Craig Weingarten

Once the elections are complete we will caravan to Taix [1911 West Sunset Boulevard near Alvarado] for our holiday banquet starting at 5:00 PM and cost is \$25.00 per person. There will be the usual transit trinket goody bag plus door prizes.

We appreciate the members who responded to the early renewal letter sent with the last newsletter. In early 2013 we are hoping to have a follow-up presentation by Metro staff on the Transit Access Pass.

The January issue of the newsletter should have the report on the annual Day After Thanksgiving trip which this year was an exploration of Omnitrans service in Chino, Chino Hills etc.

Our calendar includes coverage of a vast array of transit related holiday activities, like Santa Trains, transit buses participating in parades, etc.: <http://www.brownbearsw.com/freecal/socata>

### **Members in Action:**

Steve Crosmer attended a meeting of the Florida Coalition of Railroad passengers on Saturday November 10<sup>th</sup> in Winter Park, Florida.

For the last few months Alek Friedman has been requesting that the Los Angeles Department of Transportation install bike racks at the 99¢ Store on Wilshire west of Fairfax. Recently two brand-new bike racks were installed at the location. Alek also authored a post on L.A. Streetsblog ("De-Uglifying Hollywood: How to Make Our City Pedestrian-Friendly") that generated nearly 50 comments!

Ken Ruben and Dana Gabbard attended the Metro Citizens' Advisory Council meeting on November 14<sup>th</sup>. Ruben also attended the Metro Westside/Central Service Council meeting on the same evening, attending parts of each meeting. Ruben also attended the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup>. 🚆 🚆



## Transit Updates

### **Big Blue Bus (Santa Monica)**

Due to road work the Line 7 and Rapid 7 bus stops on Pico Boulevard and Sepulveda Boulevard will be closed until January 31, 2013. Passengers can use the bus stop east of Sepulveda at Military Avenue or west of Sepulveda at Sawtelle Boulevard. Also the westbound Line 7 stop on Pico Boulevard and Purdue Avenue will be closed until further notice due to utility relocations for the Metro Expo Line. Alternate bus stops can be found at Sawtelle Boulevard and Federal Avenue.

The westbound Line 12 stop at National Boulevard and Manning Avenue was closed until further notice on October 24<sup>th</sup> due to Expo Line Construction.

Starting October 24<sup>th</sup> Line 14 service now begins and ends at Sunset and Barrington and will not travel north of Sunset.



### **DowneyLink**

Once again DowneyLink will be offering Saturday service from November 24<sup>th</sup> until December 22<sup>nd</sup>. This service will operate from 7:20 AM to 6:30 PM.

### **GET (Bakersfield)**

Golden Empire Transit will be offering free rides on December 31<sup>st</sup> after 6:00 PM.



### **LADOT Commuter Express**

Effective November 19<sup>th</sup> the Encino Park and Ride Lot has reopened. Lines 423, 549, 573, and 574 will once again stop at the Park and Ride and will no longer stop at the temporary parking lot at the Balboa Sports Complex.

Effective November 26<sup>th</sup> the first morning run on Line 423 will now depart the Thousand Oaks Transit Center at 5:15 AM. Other time points on this trip have been modified accordingly. New brochures reflecting both of the Commuter Express changes will be available soon from LADOT.



### **LADOT -DASH**

Effective December 1<sup>st</sup> the Boyle Heights/ East LA Dash has been rerouted to serve the Metro Gold Line Station on Indiana with several new stops added to the route. New stop locations include: East 1<sup>st</sup> Street at Ditman Avenue (both directions); Indiana Gold Line Station (both directions); and East 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at Alma Avenue (westbound only). The existing southbound stop on Rowan Avenue at 3<sup>rd</sup> Street has been moved to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at Rowan going westbound.



*(Continued on Page 4)*

## ***Transit Updates Continued***

### ***Metro***

The agency has announced it will once again offer free rides on Christmas Eve and New Years. All Metro bus and Metro Rail lines will be free from 9:00 PM on the 24<sup>th</sup> until 2:00 AM on the 25<sup>th</sup> and from 9:00 PM on the 31<sup>st</sup> until 2:00 AM on the 1<sup>st</sup>.

### ***Montebello Bus Lines***

The agency has a new telephone number: 323-558-1MBL (1625) and when dialing in customer can press "1" for the directory or press "0" to be connected with customer service. New bus stop signs have also begun to appear along the agency's routes.



### ***Omnitrans***

Omnitrans has several detours in place that may affect passengers. Below is a list of those detours:

Route 9: Road construction in Redlands will cause eastbound trips to detour for most of December. Between the hours of 7:00 AM and 4:00 PM eastbound buses will detour from Brookside Avenue between San Mateo and Center Streets to travel on Olive Avenue. Temporary Eastbound bus stops will be located on San Mateo and Magnolia.

Route 19: Due to the Colton Crossing project some of the early morning weekday trip will detour off of La Cadena Drive between M Street and Valley Boulevard. Eastbound buses will go right on Valley Boulevard, left

on Rancho Avenue, left on N Street, right on La Cadena Drive, and left on M Street and back on regular route. The detour is reversed for buses traveling westbound. During the detour stops at La Cadena and L will be missed only between the 9:00 PM and 7:00 AM.

Three stops were removed from Route 10 due to low ridership and crossing at uncontrolled intersections. The stops are as follows: Citrus and Montgomery (northbound), Citrus and Elaine (northbound), and Citrus and San Jacinto.



### ***Palos Verdes***

Palos Verdes Peninsula Transit Authority will offer free rides on New Years Eve.

### ***RTA (Riverside)***

The Riverside Transit Agency will once again offer free rides on all fixed route buses after 6:00 PM on December 31<sup>st</sup>, New Year's Eve.

### ***Silver State Trailways***

Effective October 31<sup>st</sup> Silver State discontinued their scheduled service between Los Angeles/Orange County and Las Vegas. No reason was provided as to why the service was cancelled.

*(Continued on Page 8)*



## *Transit Topics* By Andrew Novak

This month in Transit Topics we have a few things you might have missed from the world of transit.

**Night Stop:** Between 8:00 PM and 5:00 AM passengers on Tri-Met buses in Portland, Oregon can request a bus stop at any location. Passengers must notify the bus operator one or two blocks in advance and the operator will stop at the nearest safe location. The service is available outside of downtown Portland and the Lloyd District.



Josh Thurman Photo

**Las Vegas "X" Train:** Recently the Las Vegas Railway Express (LVRE) and the Union Pacific (UP) had signed a conditional agreement for the LVRE to operate their "X Train" on UP tracks between Las Vegas, Nevada and Daggett, California. Current plans are for the "X Train" to run from southern California to Las Vegas and offer luxury service. LVRE hopes to have the service operating by 2013 and must fulfill several conditions in a specified time for the agreement with the UP to take effect. For more information on "X Train" visit: <http://www.vegasxtrain.com/>



**VIA Rail helps Amtrak:** From November 20-27, 2012 VIA Rail (Canada's national passenger railroad) loaned Amtrak 10 coaches and two dome cars for use on Amtrak's Adirondack service operating between Albany-Rensselaer and Montreal. With the equipment loan Amtrak was able to add cars to other services on the Northeast Corridor. Amtrak anticipated larger than normal ridership in the region in the wake of Hurricane Sandy.

**BART's record ridership:** On October 31, 2012, the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) recorded its highest single day ridership in its 40 year history. As of 10:00 PM the ridership numbers passed 553,000. The previous record was 522,198 on November 3, 2010 during the San Francisco Giants first victory parade.

**Bus Book vending:** I will conclude this month with a photo of a bus book vending machine. At the South Strip Transfer Terminal in Las Vegas, passengers can purchase soda, snacks and bus books. Charles Powell snapped the below photo in October 2012 while visiting Las Vegas. The RTC bus book machine is on the right. Machines like this one can provide bus information to passengers long after staffed counters close or on weekends. Interest idea! 🚌 🚌



## ***Public and Legislative Affairs*** By Dana Gabbard

As I write big buzz surrounds the announcement that Congressman Bill Shuster is the incoming chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee viz John Mica who was termed out under the rules of the Republican leadership. Frankly over the years I have become convinced there is danger in placing too much emphasis on personalities shaping events versus financial fundamentals and structural issues. California budget issues didn't change just because the Governorship shifted from Gray Davis to Arnold Schwarzenegger.

The conundrum of an unwillingness to raise the federal gas tax conflicting with a desire for increased infrastructure investment hobbled by inadequate existing resources is still the big problem that needs solved at the federal level. But one interesting aspect is Shuster is the son of legendary Bud Shuster who chaired the Committee from 1995 to 2001 and helped broker deals to pass reauthorization bills. Hopefully the younger Shuster has inherited some of those skills. And at least Mica's stepping down likely means no more Amtrak bashing hearings, a near obsession of his.

Quote of the month -- at the November 27<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Santa Barbara Metropolitan Transit District General Manager Sherrie Fisher in her Administrative Update notes regarding increased ad sales that a national client made the comment that MTD's buses are "really the only billboards in town!"

Kudos to the Antelope Valley Transit Authority on winning the California Transit Association Small Operators' 2012 Transit Excellence Award. The AVTA press release an-

nouncing the award quotes Board Chairman Norm Hickling as proclaiming "This is huge for the AVTA! The AVTA staff has worked diligently over the past two years to bring the agency in line with industry standards and they are now beginning to see the fruits of their labor." This is a reference to the agency bouncing back from financial scandals that led to three top administrators resigning. In the wake of this it was the object of numerous audits whose findings new Executive Director addressed while cleaning house. She noted regarding the award "We have come very far in a short amount of time. It feels good and we could not have achieved this turnaround without a supportive Board of Directors and hard-working staff. With the audit findings closed out, we can now increase our focus on system refinements to better serve our customers." (Hat tip to Editor Andrew Novak from bringing this to my attention)

Member Erik Griswold has been a persistent critic on the situation swirling around Metro's Transit Access Pass and the impending locking of the subway station gates. This is a topic I am quite familiar with and have written extensively on plus confess at this point to be quite jaded regarding. But even my cynical attitude ill prepared me for the revelations brought to my attention by Griswold on Page 55 of the agenda packet of the November 16<sup>th</sup> Metrolink Board of Directors meeting and workshop. This has a matrix of an audit by Metro of a Ticket Vending Machine Upgrade program at Metrolink funded by a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant last decade.

*(Continued on Page 7)*

## ***Public and Legislative Affairs Continued***

And while not naming names it states a key problem of the program was lack of cooperation by the then project manager for TAP at Metro, who ignored several inquiries by Metrolink staff and brought the program to a halt for several years.

Paul Dyson, President of the Rail Passenger Association of California & Nevada, brought to my attention that recently Metro Board Chair Michael Antonovich appointed Dave Golonski, Burbank Mayor, to be a Metro representative on the the Los Angeles - San Diego - San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN) Board replacing long serving Jacki Bacharach. This is interesting insofar as when Metro Board member (and Glendale City Councilman) Ara Najarian was bounced by Antonovich from the Metrolink Board there was all sorts of hue and cry in the press by Najarian. But this latest move has stirred nary a peep. Maybe that reflects a difference in the personalities involved or the relative significance of LOSSAN vs. Metrolink?

I recently contemplated the ongoing coverage of LOSSAN/Surfliner and TAP I have contributed to L.A. Streetsblog this year, breaking news that otherwise is only covered in rail advocate newsletters and rail fan message boards. I have concluded this is partly the result of the diminishing of the LA Times to not having as wide a scope as it once had. I think a decade ago they would have covered these stories. Instead what we get are such embarrassments as the recent bullet train story ("Bullet-train planners face huge engineering challenge") that treats the scope of the project as a revelation when I understood it over 10

years ago. Talk about a day late and dollar short.

Curbed LA did an echo of the Times story, and the astonishing comments to it leaves one wondering if our efforts to educate the public about transit issues is a lost cause. Many commenter's seem unaware Measure R prioritizes transportation projects in LA County while utterly ignorant about funding and the separation of various levels of government (one guy whines about San Bernardino's bankruptcy filing as if it has any bearing on bus service -- I guess he doesn't understand Omnitrans isn't a city department). Gads!

I'll conclude by noting the retirement of Will Kempton as OCTA's Chief Executive Officer effective February 28, 2013. He will be taking up the position of Executive Director of Transportation California, a Sacramento based group that advocates on behalf of the construction industry. Sounds like a good fit for him. Interestingly Darrell Johnson, the current deputy CEO, has been named as Kempton's successor as the Board eschewed the usual drawn out/expensive search for candidates. Johnson formerly worked at Amtrak and is well regarded in rail circles; looks like a good choice by the OCTA Board. 🚆 🚆

### ***Are you buried in paper?***

*We are offering the SO.CA.TA newsletter in PDF format to our members. The PDF newsletters are available a week before the meeting and are in full color. If you would like to get the PDF newsletter instead of the printed version email us at: [rtd1121@yahoo.com](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com)*

## *Transit Updates Continued*

### **Thousand Oaks Transit**

Effective November 5<sup>th</sup>, Thousand Oaks Transit made several changes to their Green Route to better serve passengers on this route. Passengers can now request a drop off at the intersection of Wilbur Road and Hillcrest Driver for easier connections to the Gold and Blue Routes at the Oaks Mall. Also passengers can request a stop the Janss Marketplace. Both of these requests should be made at the Transportation Center before the bus departs.

Also several new bus stops have been added to the Green Route. New stops have been added southbound on Olsen Road at Campus Drive, southbound Lynn Road near the intersection of Avenida de los Arboles, and southbound Lynn Road at the intersection of Camino Manzanitas. Additionally the Green Route will make a stop at the Los Robles Hospital while traveling southbound on Lynn Road.



### **Torrance Transit System (TTS)**

Once again TTS is offering the annual "Shopper's Special Bus" on weekends from November 24<sup>th</sup> to December 23<sup>rd</sup>. The free service operates from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM on both Saturday and Sunday and provides

service between the South Bay Galleria and the Del Amo Fashion Center. The bus will make stops at the following intersections: Carson and Del Amo Circle East; Hawthorne and Del Amo Boulevard; Hawthorne and Talisman Street; Artesia Boulevard and Kingsdale Avenue; and Hawthorne and Artesia Boulevard. Be on the look out of the holiday themed bus!

### **VVTA**

Effective January 1, 2013 the Victor Valley Transit Authority (VVTA) will no longer accept American Express cards for any purchases.

Effective November 12th, the BV Link time point at Barstow Hospital on Mountain View will be moved to Senior Center on Melissa Avenue due to the closure of the old Barstow Hospital. The scheduled time remains the same. 🚌 🚌

## ***WANTED!***

Photos of holiday decorated buses and trains for the January issue of the newsletter. Please email submissions to the newsletter editor at: [rtd1121@yahoo.com](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com)





*Above is the Norwalk Transit holiday bus in 2007.*



## *New Bus Services!*



Starting December 12, 2012 passengers traveling to San Francisco and Las Vegas will have another one more option from Los Angeles, Megabus.com. The low cost carrier is making it's return to the California after leaving the market in 2008. Megabus.com will now offer service from Los Angeles to Las Vegas via Riverside and Los Angeles to San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland. There will also be a route from San Francisco to Sparks, Nevada with a stop in Sacramento. Passenger's book seats online at [megabus.com](http://megabus.com) and can purchase seats for as low as \$1.00, plus a 50¢ transaction fee. Multiple trips per day are offered on each route. In Los Angeles buses pick up at Bay 1 in Gateway Plaza and in Riverside at the downtown Metrolink Station. The Las Vegas stop is at the South Strip Transfer Terminal, San Francisco and San Jose at Caltrain Stations, Oakland at BART, and in Sparks at the RTC Transit Center. The Sacramento stop is located in Old Town. Buses used on the service are brand-new Van Hool double-deckers with WiFi capabilities. For detailed schedules and to book seats visit [megabus.com](http://megabus.com)  

### *Commerce Municipal Bus Lines*

In November 2012 the Commerce Municipal Bus Lines began a new bus route from the Citadel Outlets in Commerce to downtown Los Angeles including a stop at Gateway Plaza (Union Station). The bus service operates seven days a week and like other Commerce routes fare is free. For more information and to obtain a schedule for this route contact the City of Commerce Transportation Department at: [www.ci.commerce.ca.us](http://www.ci.commerce.ca.us) or by calling 323-887-4419



## ***Expo Line Photos***



*This month we have two photos showing the progress of Metro Expo Line construction going west toward Santa Monica. Both of these photos were taken on October 21, 2012 by Alan Weeks.*

*At left we see progress on the right-of-way looking east from Dunleer Drive.*



*At right we see progress on the right-of-way looking west from Dunleer Drive.*

### ***Editor's Note***

It is once again the end of another year and once again I have had the honor of editing the Southern California Transit Advocates newsletter. This December marks my fourth full year as newsletter editor and for me personally my 18<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in the newsletter business. Along with this issue you will find a membership renewal form which I encourage all of you to return with your membership dues. Without you this would not be possible.

Thank You,  
Andrew – Newsletter Editor

## *Photos of the Month*

*Long Beach Transit  
Gillig 1208 in down-  
town Long Beach in  
November 2012 on  
the Passport.*

*—Scott Richards  
Photo*



*Metro NABI 7314 at  
the Artesia Blue Line  
Station on November  
21, 2012.*

*-Joshua Thurman  
Photo*



**How to join SO.CA.TA:** Yearly dues are \$30.00 (\$12.00 low income). Dues are prorated on a quarterly basis.

**Submission of materials:** ALL materials for the TRANSIT ADVOCATE newsletter go to Andrew Novak at P.O. Box 2383, Downey California 90242 or to [rtd1121@yahoo.com](mailto:rtd1121@yahoo.com). Please enclose a self addressed stamped envelope for returns.

**Newsletter deadlines** are the Fridays a week before SO.CA.TA meetings, at 6:00 PM Pacific time, unless otherwise announced.

**Opinions:** Unless clearly marked as "Editorial" or "Position Paper", all written material within, including all inserted flyers and postcards, are the expressed opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the Southern California Transit Advocates.

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#### **SO.CA.TA officers, 2012**

President:	Nate Zaben
Vice President:	Kent Landfield
Recording Secretary:	Edmund Buckley
Executive Secretary:	Dana Gabbard
Treasurer:	Dave Snowden
Directors at Large:	Ken Ruben J.K. Drummond (Vacant)

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|-----------------------|---------------|
| Newsletter Editor:    | Andrew Novak  |
| Newsletter Prod. Mgr: | Dana Gabbard  |
| Webmaster:            | Charles Hobbs |

NEXT SO.CA.TA MEETINGS : **Dec 8<sup>th</sup>** and **Jan 12<sup>th</sup>** at Angelus Plaza, 4th Floor, 255 S. Hill, Los Angeles

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