

Inside RTA

OCTOBER
07

The RTA Letter is published bi-monthly for Greater Cleveland public officials and community leaders. Its goal is to keep you informed of important transit issues and developments, both in the news and behind the scenes.

RTA named 'best transit system in North America'

■ **TOP AWARD:** The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) has been named the best transit system in North America "for demonstrating achievement in efficiency and effectiveness." The award is presented annually by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). Other recent winners were transit systems in New York City, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Toronto.

■ **RTA'S PROUD:** The award is considered "the Super Bowl of public transit," says RTA General Manager Joe Calabrese. "We accomplished this through outstanding cooperation with our Board of Trustees, led by George F. Dixon III, and our labor unions, led by Gary Johnson Sr. of the ATU and Michael Gettings of the FOP. But the ultimate victory came because of the hard work and dedication of our 2,700 employees. I am proud of each and every one of them. Now, the bar has been raised. We won the award, and our customers expect more from us. I know we will provide it."

■ **ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** According to APTA: "Through hard work and dedication, RTA compiled four straight years of ridership growth, improved service quality and image, broke ground on a premium 'New Starts' BRT Euclid Corridor Project, created a quarterly report card for public accountability, implemented a *Ride Happy or Ride Free* service guarantee program, introduced popular downtown trolleys, and improved its financial status. To maintain and improve its financial health, RTA learned to do more with less. Annual expenses were reduced by \$25 million, while services were maintained through better utilization of staffing, equipment and facilities."

■ **WHY RTA WON:** In making the announcement, APTA President William W. Millar said, "That RTA held the line on fare increases for 13 years is a testament to strong fiscal management. Additionally, with strong ridership increases in an area that has seen population decreases; plus upgraded services and improved safety, RTA is a public transportation system that demonstrates that hard work and going 'back to the basics' works. Receiving this prestigious honor means that RTA and its employees are the 'best of the best' in North America."

■ **SENATORIAL SALUTE:** U.S. Senator George V. Voinovich said, "I am proud of RTA's outstanding achievements. At a time when our nation faces important energy issues, we must continue to develop and support our public transportation systems. With its commitment and dedication to the Greater Cleveland community, the RTA has created a model system that other public transportation systems around the country should aspire to emulate."

■ **ACADEMY AWARD:** Governor Ted Strickland said, "RTA has won the Academy Award of the transportation industry. It's an award based on excelling in every aspect of serving the public's transportation needs, and it is well deserved."

■ **PROUD PARTNER:** Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson said, "The City of Cleveland is proud to be a partner with RTA in many efforts, especially the new Euclid Corridor BRT project. This project is a catalyst for development for the City, connecting downtown with many of the City's assets in an environmentally-friendly, technology-driven way. It will ensure future generations of Clevelanders will benefit from a world-class transportation system."

West 117th Street Station to open October 16

■ **HIGHLAND SQUARE:** A dedication ceremony will be held Oct. 16 for a \$5.5 million renovation of the West 117th Street Station on the Red Line. The work is a cooperative effort of RTA, the cities of Cleveland and Lakewood, and the Cudell Improvement Corp. Approximately 80 percent of the work is funded by the Federal Transportation Administration. The station will be called Highland Square, a nod to a name from an earlier era. Its design celebrates the area's industrial heritage, as its form reflects buildings that once stood there.

■ **MANY IMPROVEMENTS:** The West 117th Street Station is now taller, lighter and provides a more attractive edge to this important intersection. The station meets the American's with Disabilities requirements, and is attractively landscaped. It will include murals inside the station by Brinsley Tyrell. Exterior murals on the bridge will feature work from students in Lakewood and Cleveland. A local business will operate a coffee kiosk at the station during peak commuting hours.

■ **EAST 55th:** This ADA key station serves both heavy-rail and light-rail customers, as well as the RTA rail service complex. Every RTA train runs through this station on its route. Design work, coordinated with Slavic Village Development, is nearly complete. The station will feature a contemporary building and bridge system. The Board of Trustees should award construction contracts this winter, with work beginning in early 2008.

■ **DRAMATIC CHANGES:** To make the East 55th Street Station more visible, it is being moved to the southeast corner of the Rapid Corridor and East 55th Street, near the east end of I-490. Because of a 30-foot elevation difference, the \$10 million project includes two station buildings, a bridge, and parking area for patrons. RTA will also bring its bus traffic into the new parking lot. The station includes public art by Shen Shen Shang and local artist Michael Murphy.

■ **PURITAS-W. 150th:** Design of a new \$6.5 million Red Line station in West Park is 60 percent complete. Construction will begin in 2008 and take 24 months to complete. The new station will include 2 entrances, a tile art mural in the station by Dr. Ajayi, and artistic benches, lighting and a wall done by three other artists. The station will remain open during construction. RTA worked collaboratively with the Bellaire-Puritas Development Corp. on a station area plan for this neighborhood, which was funded through the Transportation for Livable Communities Initiative (TLCI) by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA).

■ **EAST 116th:** The East 116th station is an ADA key station. RTA has an agreement with the City of Cleveland to design a new station with bridge improvements that include adding a lane to the East 116th Street bridge. RTA will be the lead agency on the design of the bridge and station improvements. Design work will begin in 2008.

RTA upgrades to a modern fare collection system

■ **TIMETABLE:** In November, RTA will begin to replace its outdated fare collection system with a state-of-the-art system. It will be more efficient, as it will speed up the boarding process and reduce the wait time in lines. RTA will install new fareboxes on

buses and light-rail trains. Next year, RTA will bring ticket vending machines to Red Line stations and Silver Line stations along Euclid Avenue, as well as vending kiosks at selected locations, where passengers will be able to purchase RTA passes.

Euclid Corridor Project update: on time, on budget

■ **ON TIME:** The initial section of the \$200-million Euclid Corridor Transportation Project will open this fall – a year ahead of schedule. All orange barrels will be removed from East 17th Street to East 55th Street. Work on Public Square will be finished in time for the holiday festivities. “Although the roadway looks great, this is far from our finished product,” says General Manager & CEO Joe Calabrese. “We have not yet installed many of the amenities this project offers. We are opening the road now for the convenience of our customers.”

■ **A NEW LOOK:** You will see new pavement, transit-only lanes, special crosswalks, landscaping, and boardings from new stations in the center median strip. Standard RTA buses will provide service on several routes. Drivers and pedestrians must learn to traverse new traffic patterns, so RTA is stressing safety along the route. Please read and obey all posted signs.

■ **ON BUDGET:** RTA officials are constantly monitoring the budget and the \$100+ million in construction contracts. Despite change orders – common to every major construction project – the project remains on budget. Funding partners are the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT), the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA) and the City of Cleveland.

■ **ON TRACK:** A prototype of the 63-foot articulated Rapid Transit Vehicle (RTV) has held up well under a massive battery of tests required for every new model. Production of the 20 hybrid-electric vehicles for Cleveland has started. The first units will be delivered next spring.

■ **GRAND OPENING:** The grand opening for the project has been set for Oct. 25, 2008. Already, the area on or near the Project has seen more than \$2 billion in new and planned construction.

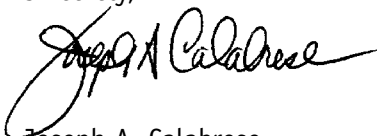
Schedule set for RTA Board monthly meetings

■ **MEETINGS:** All meetings begin at 9 a.m. at RTA’s Main Office, 1240 W. Sixth St., and are open to the public. Upcoming meetings are: Oct. 16, Nov. 6 and 20, and Dec. 4 and 18. Meetings after Nov. 1 will focus on preparing the 2008 operating and capital budgets.

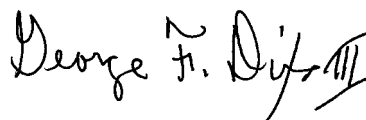
■ **ADVISORY BOARD:** The 20-member Citizens Advisory Board meets on the second Thursday of each month, at 8:30 a.m. at RTA’s Main Office, 1240 W. Sixth St. All meetings are open to the public. For information, call 216-566-5220.

IN CLOSING: For information about RTA, visit the automated trip planner at rideRTA.com, or call the RTAnswerline, 216-621-9500. If you would like more information on RTA, or if you have changes to the mailing list, send e-mail to jmasek@gcrta.org or call 216-566-5173.

Sincerely,



Joseph A. Calabrese
CEO/General Manager
Secretary-Treasurer



George F. Dixon, III
President
Board of Trustees

OCTOBER 07

INSIDER NEWS from RTA

A BIMONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR GREATER CLEVELAND PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS



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