

Rider's Digest



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REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

RTA Customers Can Avoid Gas Pains

Why pay up to \$2.30 a gallon for gas?

How would you like to fill up your gas tank only once or twice a month?

That is the situation some Clevelanders find themselves in. They are all regular customers of RTA

Gas prices in Cleveland topped \$2 a gallon last month, with some predicting \$2.30 a gallon in the near future. Those gas prices could set a record - which is little consolation to the thousands of Clevelanders who drive to work daily.

The high gas prices could have a dramatic effect on RTA ridership.

"We know from experience that Americans have a love affair with their cars," says Stephen J. Bitto, RTA's Director of Marketing and Communications. "It takes real shock to make them try something else. We believe that \$2.30 a gallon is definitely shocking, and we welcome them to try RTA."

Bitto notes that RTA offers customers:

- A \$3 All-Day Pass, with unlimited ridership until 3 a.m. the next day
- More than 7,000 free parking spaces at Park-N-Ride lots and rail stations
- Routes everywhere in Cuyahoga County. RTA buses and trains travel some 90,000 miles daily.

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- A chance to relax and unwind at least twice a day.
“We’re not advocating that commuters give up their cars completely,” Bitto says, “but rather that they incorporate a train or bus into their commute. Driving to one of our area Park-N-Rides or rapid stations instead of driving all the way downtown can save a person thousands of dollars every year, in addition to reducing the frustration of fighting traffic and bad weather.”

Cost savings calculated

Bitto notes that a monthly Express Pass costs \$54, or as low as \$1.35 per trip. Additional savings can be obtained when employers help their employees through the Commuter Advantage Program.

RTA staff members computed the potential savings figures, assuming 250 work days (5 days x 50 weeks), a 10-mile one-way commute with a late-model intermediate-size car and at least a \$5 day parking fee, which is on the low side for downtown lots.

That means an average commuter might drive 5,000 miles to and from work each year. At 40 cents a mile, that comes out to \$2,000 for driving, plus \$1,250 for parking, for a total cost of \$3,250.

RTA’s unlimited rides with a monthly express pass costs \$54 a month, or \$648 a year - a cost savings of \$2,602 annually over driving to work.

The savings would be even greater for people who drive more than 10 miles a day to work, or for those who pay more than \$5 a day for parking.

Commuter Advantage Program

Savings also grow when employers and employees use the Commuter Advantage Program. RTA monthly passes are purchased through employers, with pre-tax payroll deductions.

That means that money used to buy RTA passes is taken from a salary before income tax is calculated.

Those who pay commuter costs with pre-tax dollars are, in effect, receiving a discount.

RTA Offers Free Shuttle for EarthFest at Zoo Sunday, April 17

Earth Day Coalition's EarthFest 2005 celebrates Earth Day at the Metroparks Zoo Sunday, April 17.

Visitors who ride the free RTA Clean-Air Bus shuttle from Public Square or register for the Walk or Bike for the Earth event gain free admission to EarthFest. Otherwise, a special reduced admission applies for EarthFest and the Zoo - \$6 for 12 and older, \$3 for 2-11, and under 2 is free. EarthFest events start at 10 a.m. and continue through 5 p.m.

Ohio's largest environmental education event, this year's EarthFest features more than 125 non-profit and business exhibitors and 600 active volunteers. Displays, exhibits and workshops from businesses highlighting environmentally beneficial products and practices for the home will be set up in the Green Home Improvement Area. RTA's Clean-Air Bus featuring a bike rack will be on display in the Alternative Fuel Vehicle Area. Winners of the *Free Times* Music Awards will perform in the Party with the Planet Entertainment Area. Organic and local

foods will be highlighted in the new Local/Organic Food Area. Environmental science exhibits, featuring NASA and the U.S. EPA, will be in the Zoo auditorium.

Live entertainment, free tree give-aways and hands-on environmental activities for children will occur throughout the day. Additionally, cash awards will be presented for winners of the annual Art, Poetry and Essay Contest for students K-12. And, for every grocery bag of aluminum cans you bring to the event to be recycled, you'll have a chance to win a hybrid aluminum mountain bike provided by Novelis.

For those inclined to walk or bike, join the annual Walk or Bike for the Earth, which starts and finishes at the Zoo. Registration from 7-8 a.m. with step-off at 9 a.m. behind the Zoo RainForest building.

For more information, contact the Earth Day Coalition at (216) 281-6468 or visit www.earthdaycoalition.org.

Calabrese to Throw Out Ball for Black College All-Star Game

RTA CEO and General Manager Joe Calabrese will throw out the game ball to start the Celebrity Game featuring high-profile athletes, actors and entertainers at the second annual inaugural Black College All-Star Game at Gund Arena on Saturday, April 16.

Kym Whitley, actress/comedienne (a Greater-Cleveland native), who starred in *Next Friday* and is former host of *BET's Oh! Drama*, is the honorary chairperson for the Black College All-Star Game & Celebrity Extravaganza and will host the celebrity game.

The game will be part of a basketball quadruple header that will include Cleveland high school girls and boys' all-star basketball games and a cheerleading competition.

This year's event has an added bonus: it will increase the level of competition by pitting the top basketball players in the country from historically black colleges and universities against top players

from colleges across the State of Ohio.

Other festivities will include:

- Concerts featuring nationally renowned recording artists.
- Parties and social events hosted by community-based groups and celebrities

Most of the official events are being held in and around downtown Cleveland.

Black College All-Star Game tickets are available at all Ticketmaster locations or by calling the Gund Arena box office at (216) 241-5555 or (800) 332-2287. You may also visit www.blackcollegeallstargame.com for details



Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
www.rideRTA.com

New Timetables Are Needed for Spring Adjustments

RTA made a number of changes and schedule adjustments on bus routes as well as the Red Line and Blue/Green rapid transit runs for spring. The recent changes will require customers to obtain new timetables. The changes went into effect March 20. To obtain a new timetable, go to:

- The RTA Rotunda at the Tower City Station.
- RTA's Main Office, 1240 W. Sixth St.
- Visit www.rideRTA.com
- To receive a timetable by mail, call the RTA Answerline, 216-621-9500, from 6:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Saturday.

In addition, bus lines from Maple Heights and North Olmsted also became fully integrated into RTA last month. There were no service changes made. Customers can board buses at the same time and place they do now. In most cases, the same operator will be on the route.

Following are the routes that were changed on March 20:

#15F Warrensville Heights Flyer, weekday running time adjustments

#19 Broadway-Miles, weekday running time adjustments

#20A W. 25th-State, additional service, plus running time added

#45 Ridge, added running time, all seven days

#48 University Circle-E. 131, rerouting, schedule

RTA adjusts bus and rail schedules several times a year, to accommodate changes in usage, ridership demands and other factors.

adjustments and added running time, seven days, to accommodate bridge construction

#66 X Red Line and **#67** X Blue and Green (rail lines), schedule adjustments, seven days

#79 Fulton, morning and afternoon trips added

#86 Warren-Berea, morning schedule adjustments northbound

#135 Broadview-North Royalton, PM outbound running time adjustments

#145, York Flyer, running time adjustments

#51F Drake-Howe / **#251** Strongsville Park-N-Ride / **#451** Laurel Square, minor trip adjustments

#326 Detroit-Superior, extend AM trips from West Blvd. station to Rocky River Loop

#801, Lee-Harvard Community Circulator, to alleviate crowding, added a trip operated by big bus

Service on the **#29F** Hub Parkway Flyer, which is funded by the Job Access Program, ended March 31.

The majority of customers work for a company that is closing. However, Job Access van service to Hub Parkway continues to be available. For van service information, call 1-866-WTW-TRIP.

Two other routes- **#821** and **#70**- have recently seen minor service changes.

On April 10, the route of the **#805** Slavic Village Community Circulator will be modified to better serve Dave's Market- a change requested by the community.

RTA Moves Customer Service Center to Two New Locations

RTA moved its Customer Service Center from 315 Euclid Ave. to two new locations on April 1.

The new locations- Tower City Center and the Main Office Building at 1240 W. Sixth St.- are owned by RTA.

Customers will be able to purchase passes and farecards at the newly-renovated Customer Service Center in the rotunda of the Tower City Station, which is served by all four rail lines.

The other Customer Service Center will be on the first floor of the RTA Main Office Building, where staff will help customers with ADA and Senior Citizen related requests, as well as overseeing the Paratransit certification process. No fare media will be sold at that site.

The building, in the Warehouse District, is served by the **#147** loop bus.