

Nominations sought for RTA employee award

Do you know an RTA employee who has gone "above and beyond" to provide exceptional customer service?

If so, you may want to consider nominating that employee for the General Manager's Customer Service Award. The deadline has been extended to Jan. 20.

Nomination forms are available at the RTA Main Office, 1240 W. Sixth St.; the Customer Service Center at the Tower City Station, on the scroller at www.rideRTA.com, or call 216-566-5283.

The annual award recognizes employees, or employee teams, for exceptional customer service during the 2005 calendar year.

Progress on Shaker Square

Progress continues on two transit-related projects on the historic Shaker Square. More than 2,500 persons board daily at the light-rail station, with many transferring from three bus routes that serve the area.

The projects include:

A \$750,000 upgrade of the Shaker Square Station, which serves both the Blue and Green lines. It is now 25 percent done, and a spring completion is planned. The ADA project features two mini-high ramps for wheel chair accessibility, as well as new signage, pavement, and landscaping. The work is part of an ongoing effort by RTA to make more of its key passenger facilities ADA accessible. All RTA trains and buses are ADA-compliant.

A beautification project for the rail median strip, using \$360,000 in transit enhancement funds from the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency, is now complete.

The project was designed by Jim McKnight and constructed by Buddie Construction. The landscaping has been renewed from Shaker Square to Coventry, and a new fence and curbing has been installed.

Let's be courteous

Because of the recent surge in riders on the Rapid Transit, this is a good time to remind all riders of a few simple rules.

All RTA vehicles and facilities are smoke-free. This includes all buses and trains, all transit centers and rail stations. It also includes outside areas, such as rail station platforms, bus waiting areas or just outside the rail station doors at the street level.

This is state law and a common courtesy. Sometimes, the no-smoking signs aren't there, but the rules are always in effect.

When trains are crowded, seats are for passengers, not packages, luggage, knapsacks or your laptop. Keep these items with you or use the space inside the rail car to store luggage or packages.

Feet also belong on the floor of the rail car, not on the seat. It's no treat...to sit on a seat...that's been covered by feet.

Use trash cans in stations to dispose of your personal trash and newspapers. Rail car floors can be slippery. When they are covered with trash, they are more hazardous.

Listening to music? Just make sure that only your ears hear your music. Some folks may not appreciate your music choices.

Finally, please wait for all passengers to exit a rail car before boarding. Trying to board a train while others are trying to leave is unsafe, and could cause an accident. Some folks need extra time to exit, please give them the time they need.

A little courtesy can mean a nicer ride for everyone. Thanks for riding RTA.

RTA launches e-newsletter

RTA is introducing a e-newsletter to keep our riders more informed and up-to-date with the latest service changes and transit news. To subscribe, just send your e-mail address to webmaster@gcrta.org



Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
www.rideRTA.com

Rider's Digest



A PUBLICATION OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND
REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

A good year for RTA

2005 was a very good year for the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and its customers. Here are some highlights.

Boosted by high gas prices and service improvements, ridership jumped nearly 3.5 percent. Paratransit rides are up 27 percent and heavy-rail rides are up 8.4 percent.

RTA celebrated its 30th anniversary by fully consolidating satellite operations in Maple Heights and North Olmsted, thus completing the work that began when RTA was formed in 1975.

The Red Line marked its 50th anniversary. A new station opened at E. 105th St. and Quincy Ave. Reconstruction began at the W. 117th St. station. Design work started for a new station at Puritas. On the light-rail system, construction work continues on an ADA-compliant station upgrade at Shaker Square.

After years of planning, construction work began on the Euclid Corridor. Work on the Transit Zone was completed, and bus-only lanes are now in effect on Superior and St. Clair avenues. The Silver Line will be operational in 2008.

There were many service improvements. The #822 Community Circulator started service to Crocker Park, and the BRT-like #55F returned express bus service to the Clifton Corridor. 100 percent of RTA's buses were fitted with bike racks, and RTA expanded the hours that bikes can be carried on trains.

See "Highlights" Inside

Some timetables change on Sunday, Jan. 8

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

Some RTA bus and rail schedules will change, beginning Sunday, Jan. 8.

New timetables are being issued for the following routes:

- Blue/Green Lines (#67/67AX), Red Line (66X), #1, #2, #6, #7/7X, #8, #9/9X, #10, #19, #22, #23, #25B/W, #30, #32/32X, #34, #35, #43, #46, #48/48A, #49/49F, #51F, #55F, #55X, #76X, #79A/B, #87F, #94, #135, #326, #251, #451 and #805.

For most of these routes, there are only minor schedule adjustments or corrections to route maps.

For the following routes, there are additional changes:

- The #79A/B Fulton will use the Detroit-Superior (Veterans Memorial) Bridge instead of the Lorain-Carnegie (Hope Memorial) Bridge, between the West Side Market and Public Square.
- The #7, #9, and #32 route numbers are being dropped in favor of designating all trips as #7X, #9X, and #32X respectively. The fares on these routes will NOT change. Minor adjustments are being made to the #9X to improve on-time performance.

To obtain a new timetable, go to:

- RTA's Main Office, 1240 W. Sixth St.
- RTA's Customer Service Center, Tower City Station.
- 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.

Applications notarized

Staff in the Customer Service Center at RTA's Main Office, 1240 W. Sixth St., can now notarize all applications for discount fares and ADA eligibility. There will be no additional charge for this service. If you have questions, please call 216-566-5124.

All RTA meetings are open

RTA's Board of Trustees hosts several meetings each month that are open to the public. These meetings are held at RTA Main Office Building, 1240 W. Sixth St.

- Tuesday, Jan. 10, 9 a.m., Committee meeting.
- Tuesday, Jan. 24, 9 a.m., Regular Board meeting

The 20-member volunteer Citizen's Advisory Board meets at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 12.

Save \$\$\$\$\$, be car-free

Cleveland's Car-Free Group has new faces, new energy and is inviting people to learn more about the lifestyle.

Group organizer Megan Wilson says the group has always appealed to cyclists. Now, she invites other people to consider leaving their cars in the garage more often.

Membership is open to the public.

For more information, call 216-258-8731, or visit <http://carfree.meetup.com>

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, Jan. 16, RTA will operate regular weekday service.

Highlights *(Continued from Cover)*

In addition to the Rapid Transit work mentioned above, facility improvements included an upgrade of the rail median strip at Shaker Square, and a new Triskett garage to serve western Cuyahoga County. Construction began on a transit center at Parmatown. Design also started on the expansion of Park-n-Ride lots at North Olmsted, Westlake and Strongsville.

Vehicles continue to be upgraded. 100 percent of RTA's fleet now runs on environmentally-friendly fuel: electricity, compressed natural gas (CNG) or ultra-low sulfur diesel fuel. The overhaul of the light-rail vehicles continues. RTA purchased 47 new NABI buses that will see service in January, including 20 new gold buses that will be used on the new Gold Line service for the #55F. RTA also purchased 11 trolley-like vehicles to replace downtown loop buses next spring.

RTA's Customer Service Center was moved to the Tower City Station, thus increasing visibility and saving rent money. Signage at major customer facilities was upgraded. RTA unveiled an automated trip planner on its Web site, and added bi-lingual messages on its automated phone service.

RTA again balanced its budget in a recession year without major service cuts, layoffs or fare increases. By carefully monitoring expenses, RTA finished the year \$5 million-\$6 million better than projected.

Board approves tight budget

On Dec. 20, RTA Trustees approved an operating budget and a capital budget for 2006. Both budgets are tight, but there are no surprises.

RTA has not had a systemwide fare increase since 1993, and no fare increases are scheduled to take effect in 2006. However, RTA officials anticipate that a major initiative in early 2006 will be to investigate fare structure options that will maximize the overall benefit to customers.

RTA staff continues to wrestle with rising utility bills. In 2002, diesel fuel cost RTA \$4 million. In 2006, it is budgeted at \$13 million. The cost of natural gas for buildings and vehicles is also increasing.