

Take a cinematic ride to the 30th Film Festival

RTA offers movie-goers a convenient and economical way to see the 30th annual Cleveland International Film Festival at Tower City Center.

March Monthly Passholders (local or express) receive \$1 off their in-person or on-line purchase. This offer is good for any Festival film. Additional restrictions may apply.

For more information on the Film Festival, call 216-623-3456 or visit clevelandfilm.org



RTA's four Rapid Transit lines -- #66 Red Line, Airport to Louis Stokes/Windermere, #67/67A Blue Line (Van Aken) and Green Line (Green Road) and the Waterfront Line -- all provide direct service to Tower City Center. Trains leave Tower City about every 15 minutes.

Keep these times in mind when planning your Film Festival trip. The last trains leaving Tower City are:

Heavy rail (Red Line):

- Monday-Friday, 12:28 a.m. westbound, 11:40 p.m. eastbound.
- Saturday-Sunday, 12:25 a.m. westbound, 11:40 p.m. eastbound.

Light rail (Blue/Green/Waterfront)

- Monday-Friday, Green Line midnight and Blue Line 12:15 a.m.
- Saturday-Sunday, Green Line midnight and Blue Line 12:11 a.m.
- Waterfront Line, Monday-Friday 11:39 p.m., Saturday-Sunday, 12:23 a.m.

Visit riderta.com for schedule information and an automated trip planner. For personalized scheduling, call the RTAnswerline, 216-621-9500.

RTA e-newsletter begins

RTA publishes a customer-based e-newsletter. To subscribe by e-mail, go to riderta.com, and select "important information."

Let RTA take you to these great sporting events

For service info, visit riderta.com for the new RTA automated trip planner. If you need even more details, call the RTAnswerline, 216-621-9500.

At Quicken Loans Arena

Cavaliers basketball game

- March 1, 5, 7, 19, 22, 24, 29

Barons ice hockey

- March 3, 4, 23

Other events

- March 8-11, MAC Tournament
- March 16, Smuckers Ice Show
- March 18, Moondog Coronation Ball
- March 20, Coldplay concert
- March 21, Queen and Paul Rodgers
- March 26 and 28, NCAA basketball

Park free at any rail station. Buy a \$3 All-Day Pass. Ride any rail line to Tower City and take the Walkway to Gateway.

At CSU's Wolstein Center

- March 10-11, Buckeye Regional FIRST Robotics competition
 - March 12, Winter Jam tour spectacular
 - March 15, Taste of Chaos concert
 - March 17, Casting Crowns concert
 - March 18, New Jack swing reunion concert
- Park free at any rail station. Buy a \$3 All Day Pass, ride any rail line to Tower City. Ride bus routes #8, #14, #25, #33, #32X, #247 Loop.

At Crocker Park, Westlake

- **March 17, 11 a.m.-1:30 a.m.**, 15 hours of Irish entertainment in a 2,200 square foot heated tent
- Ride the #46, #55F, #808 or #822 Community Circulators.



Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority
rideRTA.com

Rider's Digest



A PUBLICATION OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

St. Patrick's Day: A survival guide

If you are heading downtown on March 17 to watch the St. Patrick's Day parade, leave the driving to RTA. Some things to remember:

- This year's parade will be held on Superior Ave.
- RTA will add extra rail service all day to meet the increased demand.
- You are encouraged to buy a \$3 All-Day Pass, which provides unlimited rides until 3 a.m. You need exact change to purchase your card.

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



- Open beverage containers are not permitted on RTA vehicles or property. Transit Police will enforce regulations with uniformed and plain-clothes officers.
- RTA offers more than 7,000 free parking spaces at rail stations. Obey all signs. Cars that block normal operations will be towed at your expense.
- Buses will be detoured off parade routes to nearby streets. Normal operations will resume as soon as possible.
- For more info, visit rideRTA.com, or call the RTAnswerline, 216-621-9500.

College basketball dominates the Q

College basketball fans will flock the Quicken Loans Arena this month.

RTA will provide convenient and economical service to the men's and women's MAC tournament, March 8-11, and to the NCAA Division I Women's Basketball Cleveland Regional on March 26 and 28.

There are more than 7,000 free parking places along RTA rail lines. All trains stop at the Tower City Station, which has a direct connection to the "Q" via the Walkway to Gateway.

Sixteen of the top MAC basketball teams will compete to determine which schools get the MAC's automatic bid to the NCAA tournaments. Men's games are:

- **March 9:** noon, 2, 7 and 9 p.m.
- **March 10,** 7 and 9 p.m.
- **March 11,** 7 p.m. championship (ESPN2)

Women's games are:

- **March 8,** 1, 3, 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.
- **March 10,** noon and 2:30 p.m.
- **March 11,** 1 p.m., championship (Fox Sports Net/Comcast)

For more information, call 1-800-820-CAVS, visit thearena.com or mac-sports.com

The NCAA event is hosted by Cleveland State University and the MAC. Game times and teams will be announced the week of the tournament.

All RTA meetings are open

RTA's Board meetings are open to the public. They are held at RTA Main Office Building, 1240 W. Sixth St.

- **Tuesday, March 14,** 9 a.m., Committee meeting
- **Tuesday, March 21,** 9 a.m., Regular Board meeting

The 20-member volunteer Citizen's Advisory Board meets at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 9.

High fuel costs prompt talk of fare increase

The RTA Board began discussions Feb. 21 on ways to increase revenue to offset rising diesel fuel prices. One way – a possible fare increase – will be discussed further at the Board's March 21 meeting.

If the Board feels a possible fare increase would be a better alternative than cutting service, RTA would schedule 6-8 public hearings in late April and early May. If the increase is approved by the Board in late May, it could take effect around July 1.

The 2006 RTA budget is balanced, but unless additional revenue is generated, deficits are projected for 2007 and 2008, says CEO and General Manager Joe Calabrese. He noted that:

- RTA has not raised its fares in more than 13 years, since 1993.
 - RTA has held the line on fare increases longer than any other major transit system in the nation. A transit expert recently talked with National Public Radio and called that feat "remarkable."
 - In recent years, State funding for transit has been cut by more than 63 percent.
- "Fuel prices are killing us," Calabrese says. "If fuel prices were normal, we would not be having this discussion."*

- RTA uses 54 million gallons of diesel fuel each year.
- When diesel fuel prices increase by a penny a gallon, it costs RTA \$54,000 a year.
- Diesel fuel was budgeted at \$4 million in 2002, and \$13.5 million in 2006.

Calabrese says RTA has done a great job on controlling other expenses and operating more efficiently. In fact, moves made over the past few years are now saving taxpayers more than \$25 million a year.

- The reduction of 366 positions, largely through attrition.

- The consolidation of bus districts to reduce overhead expenses
- The elimination of 106 buses from the fleet, because of more efficient maintenance procedures.
- The integration of bus service with Maple Heights and North Olmsted, saving more than \$3 million annually.
- The increasing use of new technology to greatly increase our efficiency.

Calabrese says RTA's has only two options to resolve future deficits.

"We must either reduce service frequency, or generate more revenue through a fare increase. Our customers have already told us that, after 13 years of stability, they would favor a fare increase over service cuts. Overall, they rated our service as very good, and our value as excellent."

RTA is coming off three straight years of ridership increases, but that is not enough to offset the rising gas prices, Calabrese said.

Only 16 percent of RTA's operating budget comes from fares, while 70 percent comes from a one percent countywide sales tax.

RTA receives capital funding from the Federal government, but that can only be used for large capital purchases, like buying buses and upgrading rail stations.

RTA recently has received special earmarked funding for the Euclid Corridor Transportation Project, and that can only be used for that specific project. None of these funds can be used to cover operating expenses – such as diesel fuel, employee wages or health-care benefits.

RTA is looking at other revenue-generating options, such as adding transit advertising to bus shelters, something that is common throughout the transit industry.