

Nominate a top volunteer today

RTA officials and the Citizens Advisory Board are seeking nominations for the F. Robert Wiesenberg Community Volunteer Award.

The award honors the late Mr. Wiesenberg, who served on RTA's Advisory Board for more than 25 years. He was also active in Rocky River city government, and served on committees throughout the county.

Nominees should be residents of Cuyahoga County and perform volunteer work in this region. They should have demonstrated a willingness to get involved, an unselfish giving of oneself, an ability to lead others and a desire to enhance the quality of life in the community.

Nominations will be accepted from individuals and organizations until April 1. The winner will be announced at an RTA Board meeting, and honored at a banquet in late spring. Nomination forms are available at rideRTA.com. If you have questions, call 216-566-5251.

Send the nomination form to: Volunteer Award Committee, Marketing & Communications Department, RTA, 1240 W. Sixth St., Cleveland, Ohio 44113.

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 is no additional charge for this service. If you have questions, please call 216-566-5124.

For your safety

Safety has always been a top priority at RTA, and you – our riders and customers – have always been our partners in that effort.

With this issue of *Rider's Digest*, we are making our partnership a little more formal. From now on, the back panel each month will be dedicated to safety news and tips you can use during your trips on RTA.

Yes, accidents do happen, but almost every accident could have been prevented.

It is our goal to ensure your safety at our rail stations, at our bus shelters and bus stops and on our vehicles.

Even one accident is one accident too many. It's very basic, but for starters, please obey all the posted rules.

When waiting on the rail platform, do you stand back from the yellow line, or do you crowd the edge as the train pulls in?

When riding a bus, do you try to engage the operator in idle conversation, or do you let him or her concentrate on their job?

These are small things, but they can go a long way to ensure the safety of all concerned.

So watch this space every month.

Stay warm...and stay safe.

Pamela McCombe
Director of Safety



Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority

Rider's Digest



A PUBLICATION OF THE GREATER CLEVELAND
REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Thanks for your support

You came, you spoke and we listened.

I sincerely thank the 1,000 or more customers who braved the weather to attend the 10 public hearings that RTA held during the first week of January.

Your written and verbal comments will help us as we make adjustments to the service reduction plan that was originally proposed by our Service Management team. Our goal is always to maximize our resources and deliver as much high-quality service as possible.

This plan will be finalized by March 1, so that we can begin to distribute this important information to the public. It is anticipated that the fare proposal will take effect on April 1. The service reductions may take effect on April 4.

I also thank those who signed petitions and sent e-mails to elected officials, asking for more funding for public transportation, and for more flexibility in the funding that is provided.

The Coalition to Save Transit Now is asking that all who have not yet done so, log on to www.fundohiotransitnow.org to send e-mails directly to your state legislators and members of Congress.

Thanks for supporting RTA.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph A. Calabrese'.

Coalition formed to save Ohio transit

For the first time ever, 10 transportation, public policy, social service, and environmental organizations have joined forces in a campaign to reverse the decline of public transportation in Ohio.

These organizations united under the name "Save Transit Now, Move Ohio Forward!" Their first goal is to safeguard public transit users from further service cuts/fare increases and to save Ohio's economy and environment from further decline. They want to:

- Overturn the state constitutional prohibition on using gas tax revenues and motor vehicle fees for non-highway purposes, thereby freeing up that revenue to be used for mass transit.
- Use flexible transportation funding sources currently available in Ohio – such as gas taxes collected from off-road vehicles, farming and landscaping equipment, and revenue raised from vanity license plates – to fund mass transit.
- Wherever possible, the Ohio Department of Transportation and metropolitan planning organizations should take advantage of flexible federal highway funds and use them for public transportation.

Public Transit in Ohio

Public transit is heavily used in Ohio. More Ohioans travel on buses and trains each day than fly in and out of Ohio's airports. More than 350,000 Ohioans each day use buses and trains to reach jobs, medical appointments, grocery stores, day care, pharmacies, schools, job training and other services.

The coalition campaign began in Cleveland because it has as many public transit riders as all other Ohio transit agencies combined. While the need for secure, stable and low-cost public transit is greatest in Greater Cleveland, the new coalition

pledges to fight for transit funding for all Ohio.

Despite the need for public transportation, Ohio transit agencies have been forced to slash transit services and raise fares. While most states have dramatically increased support for public transit, Ohio has cut funding by 75 percent since 2002.

Less than three percent of Ohio's transportation budget is spent on public transit.

Ohio Transit compared to other states

Ohio ranks 40th in the nation for relative commitment to public transit, despite the fact that is the 7th most populous state. Even Michigan spends 10 times more than Ohio, and Pennsylvania spends 19 times as much.

Cuts to federal and state transit funding have forced Ohio transit agencies to rely on local sales, income and property taxes, which are difficult to procure and tumbling due to the economy. Because of this over-dependence on local funding, all Ohio public transit agencies are in serious trouble.

Members of the coalition include: RTA's Citizen Advisory Board, GreenCity-BlueLake Institute, Ohio Empowerment Coalition and Contact Center, Ohio Apollo Alliance, Policy Matters Ohio, All Aboard Ohio, Environment Ohio, Ohio Environmental Council and Bike, Walk Ohio!

To sign an on-line petition, go to:
www.PetitionOnline.com/transOH/petition.html

To learn more about the coalition, go to:
www.policymattersohio.org/SaveTransitNow.htm

To send e-mail to your elected officials, visit:
www.fundohiotransitnow.org

For information on RTA's budget issues, go to:
www.riderta.com/budgetchallenges

Customer Code of Conduct

RTA carries more than 50 million customers a year, and the riding experience should be enjoyable for each of them. Following these simple rules will help you – and those around you – enjoy your trip.

- Pay the required fare for all trips.
- Allow room for boarding, keep aisles clear.
- Take only one seat.
- Use earphones with audio devices.
- Speak softly on cell phones.
- Refrain from using profane language.
- Be considerate to fellow passengers.
- Follow all posted safety and restriction signage.
- Place trash in receptacles at stations and stops.
- Exit through the rear door on buses.

Misconduct on a public transit system is a crime.

RTA phone numbers

RTA Answerline 216-621-9500
(automated 24/7)

TDD for hearing impaired 216-781-4271

Customer Service 216-566-5227

Paratransit 216-781-1110

TDD for hearing impaired 216-781-6148

Transit Police Dispatch 216-566-5163
(on duty 24/7)

Elevator Status Hotline 216-566-5170

Main Office Building 216-566-5100