



APTA Reports 10.3 Billion Public Transportation Trips

In March 2008, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) announced that Americans took 10.3 billion trips on public transportation in 2007. This was the highest level of public transportation users in 50 years and represented a 2.1% increase over 2006 ridership numbers.

"In light of high gas prices, increased road congestion, and expanded public transit services, this continued growth in ridership demonstrates how important public transportation is for America."

The following is an excerpt from APTA's 2007 Public Transportation Ridership Report:

"In light of high gas prices, increased road congestion, and expanded public transit services, this continued



growth in ridership demonstrates how important public transportation is for America," said APTA president William W. Millar. "Now with gas prices predicted to rise to \$4 a gallon, there is a greater urgency for higher federal funding to expand U.S. public transportation systems so Americans have an affordable transportation choice.

Public transportation use is up 32 percent since 1995, a figure that is more than double the growth rate of the population (15%) and up substantially over the growth rate for the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on our nation's highways (24%) for that same period.

Light rail (modern streetcars, trolleys, and heritage trolleys) had the highest percentage of ridership increase among all modes, with a 6.1 percent increase in 2007. Light rail systems showed double digit increases in the following areas: New Orleans (128.6%); Denver (66.2 %); Saint Louis (27.0%); Philadelphia (26.2%); Kenosha (18.5 %); the state of New Jersey (14.7%); and Memphis (11.3%).

"In addition, public transportation is a key part of the solution to decreasing greenhouse gases and meeting our national goal of energy independence," concluded Millar. "When more people ride public transportation, there are more reductions in carbon emissions and our country is less dependent on foreign oil."

Commuter rail posted the second largest ridership increase at 5.5 percent. The five commuter rail systems with the double digit ridership growth rate in 2007 were located in the following areas: Nashville (257.9%); Santa Fe (96.6%); Harrisburg (41.3%); Seattle (27.4%); Oakland (14.2%); Dallas/Fort Worth

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Notes from the Top

by Donna Lavigne

Looking at the calendar, it's hard to believe that we are already a quarter of the way through 2008. However, it has been a new year packed with exciting changes here at DOTD. Along with our new governor, we have a new DOTD Secretary and he is very knowledgeable regarding transit issues. We also have new staff, returning staff, and departing staff here in the Public Transportation section. Finally, the CTAA EXPO returns to Louisiana in June.

Governor Bobby Jindal took the reins this year; he named Dr. William D. Ankner as DOTD's new Secretary. Dr. Ankner comes to Louisiana from Missouri where he was responsible for creating and running the Missouri Transportation Institute and was a principal in his own consulting firm. Dr. Ankner served seven years, from 1996-2003, as CEO of the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and has held senior management positions in the Delaware DOT, New Jersey DOT and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. Most recently he served as a panelist to the US Controller General's Transportation Finance Focus Group and as a participant with the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's Blue Ribbon Panel of Transportation Experts.

Before taking over at DOTD, Dr. Ankner was asked a series of questions by DOTD's Communications Director, Mark Lambert. Here is an excerpt from that interview:

Q: You're known as an advocate of transit. Can you talk about your transit philosophy?

A: Transportation is a system not simply a mode of travel, like highways. The answer to our congestion problems is not always to build more highways. Often we can't build our way out of congestion. We have to be more strategic, and one element we

need to consider is transit. Buses are the traditional way to have transit, and probably the most economical. We need to think about traffic and opportunities and benefits. Commuter rail is expensive, but if the market exists, we should be looking to develop this alternative to highway congestion.

Please join us in welcoming Secretary Ankner. To read the full interview, please go to our website at www.dotd.state.la.us/pressreleases

As mentioned earlier, we have had a number of staff changes in the past several months. Michelle Horne, formerly the Rural Program Manager has taken over as the Urban Program Manager / Planner. We have concluded interviews and will be making a decision soon regarding a new Rural Program Manager. We have filled the Elderly & Disabled

Program Manager position with a returning member of our staff, Mike Watts. Mike was our accountant several years ago. Daria West has returned to the DOTD Accounting Section, leaving a vacancy in the Discretionary Programs Manager position, which we will be interviewing for soon. Finally, we have a new Administrative Assistant, Rita Gobert. Please help us welcome our returning staff and bid farewell to departing staff... more on the vacant positions in our next newsletter.

In June, the Community Transportation Association of American returns to New Orleans. The EXPO was last held in New Orleans in 1999. The CTAA EXPO will take place June 1-6, 2008 at the New Orleans Convention Center. Of special note is the 19th Community Transportation Roadeo that will be held on June 1st. Our very own Harold Beck and Mike Watts will be big participants in the Roadeo (see the Spotlight article for more details). For more information on the CTAA EXPO go to: www.ctaa.org 



Announcements

Join APTA in celebrating the third annual National Dump the Pump day on Thursday, June 19, 2008.

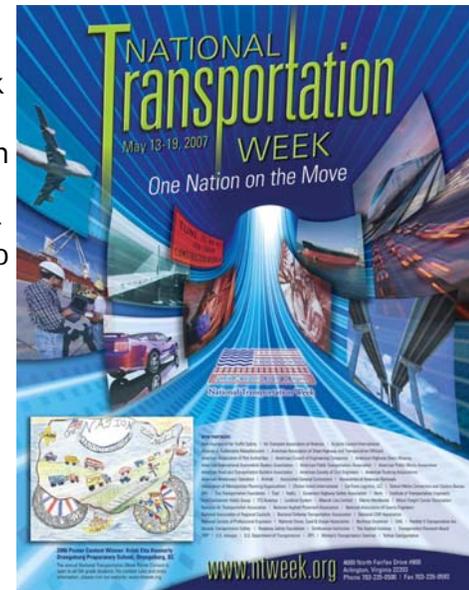


The day is designed to encourage people to get out of their cars and ride public transportation to raise awareness of the financial and environmental benefits of public transportation. Public transportation has the ability to save people money, conserve gasoline, and reduce the harmful greenhouse gases emitted into our environment.

On June 19, public transit agencies from coast to coast will join together to encourage their communities to dump the pump by leaving their cars at home and riding public transportation.

For more information and a promotional packet, visit www.apta.com

The 2008 National Transportation Week is scheduled for the week of May 11-17, 2008. National Transportation Week provides an opportunity for the transportation community to join together for greater awareness about the importance of transportation. National Transportation Week also focuses on making youth aware of transportation-related careers.



There are events and activities planned including a poster contest; above is last years winner. For more information see the NTW Activities and Calendar pages at www.ntweek.org

Events Calendar

APTA Conferences

Bus & Paratransit Conference & International Bus Rodeo
May 3-7, 2008 Austin, TX

International Rail Rodeo
May 29 - June 2, 2008 San Francisco, CA

Rail Conference
June 1-4, 2008 San Francisco, CA

Sustainability and Public Transportation Workshop
July 27-29, 2008 Chicago, IL

EXPO 2008
October 6-8, 2008 San Diego, CA

For more information: www.apta.com

Other Upcoming Conferences/Training:

SWTA Law Conference
July 20-22, 2008 Santa Fe, NM

For more information: www.swta.org

TRB Bus Rapid Transit Workshop
July 21-22, 2008 Cleveland, OH
Marriott Cleveland Downtown

TRB 18th National Rural Public & Intercity Bus Transportation Conference
October 19-22, 2008 Omaha, NE

For more information: www.trb.org

Community Transportation Association of America EXPO and Bus Rodeo 2008
June 1-6, 2008 New Orleans, LA

For more information: www.ctaa.org

LA DOTD Public Transportation

CRAFT Training for Section 5311 Rural Transportation Providers
May 30, 2008 Baton Rouge, LA
LTRC Training Facility

Look for more information coming your way soon.

CTAA/DOTD Supervisory Skills Training
July 16-18, 2008 New Orleans, LA
Doubletree Hotel

NTI Courses:

For information: www.ntionline.com

Transportation Safety Institute Classes

Courses are offered around the country on various topics throughout the year. For more information, please visit: www.tsi.dot.gov



Spotlight on...

CTAA EXPO & Roadeo 2008 Come to New Orleans

June 1-6, the Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA) Community Transportation EXPO returns to New Orleans, La. The EXPO was last held in New Orleans in 1999 (Pre-Katrina). The EXPO returns to a city very much in the middle of rebuilding itself, one in which mobility and community and public transportation are playing a vital role in that revitalization process.

This year's EXPO will feature some excellent training opportunities. The EXPO will offer everything from certification programs to basic skills sessions. There will be professional development sessions, held later in the week, that have been completely revamped to offer refresher courses, discussion forums and key transit topics.

The EXPO week will, as usual, include the Trade Fair, a plenary session focusing on Politics 2008, fun events like the Big Night Out and numerous opportunities to network. The EXPO will also feature the 19th Community Transportation Roadeo.

The Roadeo brings the best community and public transit drivers from across North America to test their skills and abilities in driving, wheelchair loading and securement, vehicle inspection and a written test. Each year, the top finishers in the Bus and Van divisions are rewarded with a trophy and a check. The overall winner receives the coveted Ricon Driver of the Year Award.

The Community Transportation Roadeo 2008 will be held in New Orleans on Sunday, June 1. All drivers and judges must participate in meetings held on Saturday afternoon, May 31st at the New Orleans Hilton; the drivers' written test will be administered that evening.

DOTD will play a big role in this year's Roadeo. Harold Beck is serving on the Roadeo Committee and is providing the cones, barrels and radar gun needed to set up the course. Harold has also persuaded several agencies from the New Orleans area to provide the buses and vans that will be used in the competition. Mike Watts will be a sitting judge during the day-long competition.

In addition, we have five (5) drivers participating in the Roadeo this year. Louisiana drivers participating in the Roadeo include: Kenneth Clayton from St. James Parish Public Transportation; and Marcus Hubbard, Sharon Wallis, Angela King, and Pamela Hickman all from The Center, Inc. DOTD's RTAP Program is providing scholarships for each of the Louisiana drivers participating in the Community Transportation Roadeo.

The Roadeo concludes with a gala awards banquet on Sunday night, where all drivers and judges will be honored and the top winners in both van and bus categories will be crowned. The evening will close with the presentation of the Ricon Driver of the Year Award. 

One of the DOTD PT Section's mandates is to provide information and technical assistance to transit providers



in Louisiana to assist them in meeting their requirements for FTA funding. These activities come in many different formats and venues. DOTD PT provides numerous training courses, workshops, and training material as well as a website and an annual conference. To keep all of our constituents up to date on DOTD PT's activities, DOTD On The Go features just a few selected items each quarter.

New Vehicles Ordered

The long awaiting new vehicle order has finally arrived. A total of 127 new vehicles were ordered for distribution to agencies throughout Louisiana for FY '06 & '07. Inspections are taking place, many of the vehicles are already in service and the rest will be ready for service in the near future.

LA Swift Contract Extension

The LA Swift intercity bus service that was scheduled to end this June will be extended to next June. The contract has been extended through June 30, 2009. The service continues to provide vital trips for the recovery effort in Louisiana.

New Section 5310 Providers

We are excited to announce that seven new agencies were added to the list of Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Transportation this year. Those agencies include: Evergreen Ministries, Hammond, LA; Foundation Industries, Zachary, LA; Holy Angels Residential Faculty, Shreveport, LA; New Horizons, Inc., Shreveport, LA ; St. James ARC, Vacherie, LA; The Greater King David Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, LA; The Magnolia School, Inc., Jefferson, LA.

SWTA Scholarships Awarded

DOTD is pleased to announce that it was able to provide scholarships to the South West Transit Associations Annual Conference and EXPO. The following people received scholarships to attend SWTA's 28th Annual Conference and Expo, on February 17-19 in Fort Worth, TX: Joseph Comerford, Monroe Transit; F. Renee Nelson, City of Lake Charles Transit; Donald Robinson, St. Landry Parish Community Action Agency and Jean Reynolds, Claiborne Public Transit.

CTAA Scholarships Awarded

DOTD is also pleased to announce that it will be providing scholarships for ten people to attend the Community Transportation Association of America's EXPO 2008 on June 3-6 in New Orleans. The recipients will include: Sabrina Sonnier, Avoyelles COA; Kenneth Comeaux, Terrebonne COA; Lewis Pace, Webster Parish OCS; Yvonne Smith, Allen COA; Erica Grace; St. Martin COA; Joyce McElroy, Winn COA; Morris Guidry, S.M.I.L.E.; Katherine Braswell, Red River COA; Mary Dowling, Tangipahoa COA and O.Jay Barbier, B.I.M.S.

In The Spotlight

If your agency or someone within your agency deserves recognition for a job well done, or has already received recognition or an award, please let us know. Email or send a brief description, photos, and contact information to wandawalker@dotd.la.gov or to Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development/ Public Transit Section, attn: Wanda Walker, P.O. Box 94245, Baton Rouge, LA 70804. 

Contact Information Announcement

In our attempt to keep everyone informed of special events, workshops, conferences, and important information regarding public transportation in Louisiana, DOTD PT maintains a Contact Database. If information about your organization - new phone number, new director, new address or email - has changed, please help us keep our database current. Email your updated information to: publictransportation@dotd.la.gov

Thanks for your Help!

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(12.1%); Stockton (11.9%); Portland, ME (11.8%); and Pompano Beach, FL (10.3%).

Heavy rail (subways) ridership increased by 3.1%. The heavy rail systems with double digit increases in ridership for 2007 were in the following cities: San Juan (13.2 %) and Atlanta (10.1%).

Bus service saw an increase of 1.0, but in communities with a population of less than 100,000, bus services saw an increase of 6.4% in 2007. Major increases by large bus agencies occurred in the following cities: Seattle (7.5%); Denver (7.0%); and Minneapolis (5.4%).

The following table shows the ridership numbers from the APTA report.

MODES	Jan '06 to Dec '06	Jan '07 to Dec '07	Percent Change
Heavy Rail	2,908,948	3,000,057	3.13%
Light Rail	406,980	431,748	6.09%
Commuter Rail	436,780	460,800	5.50%
Trolleybus	103,007	101,048	-1.90%
Bus by Population Group			
2,000,000+	3,737,602	3,737,465	0.00%
500,000 to 1,999,999	1,306,328	1,322,098	1.21%
100,000 to 499,999	446,363	462,291	3.57%
below 100,000	450,010	478,768	6.39%
Bus Totals	5,940,303	6,000,622	1.02%
Demand Response	127,407	132,360	3.89%
Other *	122,980	126,987	3.26%
TOTALS	10,046,405	10,253,622	2.06%

Source: APTA Public Transportation Ridership Report

While the APTA report points to a clear increase in ridership in 2007, it is important to understand two facts:

First, the numbers reported are for unlinked passenger trips. An unlinked transit passenger trip is a trip on one transit vehicle regardless of the type of fare paid or transfer presented. A person riding only one vehicle from origin to destination takes ONE unlinked passenger trip; a person who transfers to a second vehicle takes TWO

unlinked passenger trips; a person who transfers to a third vehicle takes THREE unlinked passenger trips. APTA estimates that the number of people riding transit on an average weekday is 45% of the number of unlinked transit passenger trips.

Second, the numbers that APTA reports are from a sampling of agencies. APTA routinely surveys approximately 450 of their member agencies and uses a formula to impute the ridership for the nation. According to APTA, the only figure that is really in question is the number of demand response trips that are reported.

Regardless, the news is good for public transportation - ridership is up in the United States. Whether it due to social or environmental consciousness or the rising cost of gas, public transportation is a growth industry now and will continue to be in the future. The next big hurdle will be a genuine look at adequate funding at the national level. 🇺🇸



From Capital Hill...

The Senate recently passed a SAFETEA-LU Technical Corrections bill. Among other provisions, the bill would permit transit agencies that lost the ability to use federal funds for operating assistance because of the 2000 census to use a portion of their federal funds for operating purposes in FY 2008 and FY 2009. The modified Senate version must now be sent back to the House for a final vote. 🇺🇸