



florida public transportation association

SEPTEMBER 2003



“From The Capitol”

By: Wes Watson

It is the quiet season in Tallahassee at the moment as legislators have returned to the Districts to lick their wounds and rest up from three Special Sessions in addition to a most arduous Regular Session. They are gathering themselves for the start of what promises to be another rancorous Session beginning March 2, 2004, but with committee meetings slated to begin in October. Unlike past, non-election years, this time around no meetings were scheduled for September.

The state’s budget will be the central focus once more. But this time many of the “squirrel holes” and one time fixes that were resorted to this year, will not be available. This may place even greater pressure on raiding trust funds to help balance the budget – something that does not bode well for the state’s largest, the Transportation Trust Fund. Last year \$200 million was extracted from the TTF, with \$30 million of that coming from the Public Transportation portion. Fortunately, most of those latter funds could be found in inactive areas so that on-going transit programs were not impacted. That may not be the case if the same, or worse happens next year.

FPTA has joined the Floridians for Better Transportation, an umbrella group for a broad range of

Continued on page 8

JTA Hosts Mega-Roadeo

Jacksonville Transportation Authority hosted an extremely successful Mega-Roadeo in May. A special visitor was Congresswoman, Corrine Brown, a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Competition among the operators could not have been closer with a single point determining the winner. Results were: Operator First Place – Peter Marchessault (TalTran); Runnerup – Rendol Whidden (BCT); 2nd Runnerup – Dennis Collins (JTA). Among the Maintenance Treams: Winner – JTA (Chris Thompson, Paul Alexander, James Davis); Runnerup – SCAT; 2nd Runnerup – TalTran.



Left to Right: Jeff Logan, RTS; Mike Blaylock, JTA; Rep. Corrine Brown; Wes Watson, FPTA

Congratulations to all competitors and especially to TalTran and JTA for placing in both events.

Chris Hager joins Escambia County Area Transit (ECAT)



Chris R. S. Hager, assistant general manager with ATC-NEC Regional Public Transportation Authority in Phoenix, Arizona, has joined Escambia County Area Transit (ECAT) in Pensacola, Florida as new Resident Manager. As the Resident Manager, Chris is the key member of the ATC-NEC team responsible to Escambia County for the overall management of the system and for the safe, efficient,

Continued on page 2

Relief Is In Sight For Commuters

The Palmetto Metrorail Station is now open and offering free parking and Metrorail service originating at the station until June 30.



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF THE PALMETTO METRORAIL STATION
7701 NW 79th Avenue, Medley, Florida
Exit West on NW 74th Street, off State Road 826

Local, state and federal officials gathered at the new Palmetto Metrorail Station to celebrate its grand opening on Friday, May 30, 2003. The Palmetto Metrorail Station is the 22nd of the rapid transit system and is the first to open in 14 years.

Highlights of the grand opening ceremony included a special presentation to retired Congressman William Lehman, who helped secure construction of this project by advocating the allocation of \$17 million in surplus funds from the Metromover Project. After the ceremony, public officials and dignitaries participated in an inaugural ride with Mayor Penelas at the helm.

The completion of the Palmetto Metrorail Station and 1.4 mile rail extension is a transportation milestone for the County. Located at 7701 NW 79th Avenue in the Town of Medley, the station is the area's only transport hub for commuters traveling eastbound, originating in Northwest Miami-Dade and Southwest Broward County. It provides an alternative to driving that offers easy, affordable and rapid travel into Northwest Miami, Downtown/Brickell, Coconut Grove, South Miami and Kendall.

The Palmetto Metrorail Station

is characterized by a grand roof structure that serves as a focal point from the Palmetto Expressway and by an easy access layout for busses and private vehicles alike. Commuters are greeted by a landscaped plaza leading to an open air double-height station concourse; its notable architectural features include striking columns and glass block clearstories. Complementing the station's natural environment, the Miami-Dade Art in Public Places Trust commissioned renowned Miami artist Robert Huff to create an elevating and culturally rich public environment. The result is EAST/WEST, a remarkable work of art consisting of a hand-glazed ceramic tile support-structured roof system at the departure and arrival platform of the station.

Begun in July 1999, the Palmetto Extension Project cost \$87.8 million, with funding by the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Highway Administration and the Florida Department of Transportation. Total funding included nearly \$17 million in surplus funds from the Metromover

Extension Project, \$2.2 million from the Local Option Gas Tax and \$3.6 million from Road Impact Fees.

DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

Danny Alvarez, Executive Director of OPTM; Jerry Franklin, FTA Regional Director; Mayor Alex Penelas, Miami-Dade County; County Commissioner Bruno A. Barriero, District 5 & Chairperson of the OPTM Sub-Committee; US Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart, Florida District 21; US Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, Florida District 25.

Hager Joins ECAT **(continued from pg.1)**

and comfortable mass transit service to the citizens.

Chris has over ten years transit experience and has held positions in operations, safety, and training. His broad transit background will benefit all aspects of the system—everyone will benefit.

Hager plans to increase ridership, enhance customer service programs, upgrade ECAT's identity, and develop route improvements. Hager said, "improving passenger relations and system routes is always a priority."

ECAT operates 38 public transit vehicles in Escambia County, including four beach trolley buses and on-campus service at the University of West Florida. All ECAT vehicles are lift-equipped. Last year, ECAT vehicles provided 1.6 million passenger trips and traveled 7.4 million passenger miles.



Palm Tran Introduces “Seniors In Motion” Program

“Seniors in Motion” is an upbeat title of an innovative and beneficial program to introduce older South Floridians to the notion of using mass transit instead of cars to get around.

The program, in its second year, is run by Palm Tran, Palm Beach County government’s public bus system, using a \$75,000 state and county grant. Each month, it offers presentations and

on-the-road sessions in buses and Tri-Rail commuter trains for about 100 seniors and disabled adults. Participants learn how to read bus and train route schedules and maps, buy tickets and make connections.

Transportation experts believe it’s the only program of its kind in Florida, but it won’t be the only one for long. A new state law requiring drivers over age 80 to be vision-tested to keep their driver’s licenses also makes the state Department of Motor Vehicles name a committee to report later this year on transportation alternatives for seniors who have to give up their wheels.

The promise of mass transit on buses, trains and people-movers always sounds positive and user-friendly.

Sadly, the reality is often less so. A recent “Seniors in Motion” trip, from downtown Delray Beach 25 miles to the Sawgrass Mills Mall in Sunrise, showed some of the flaws of mass transit in South Florida. The Delray Beach bus stop, like many in the region, has no shelter to shield waiting passengers. Tri-Rail was late, making the seniors miss their first Broward County bus connection to the mall. And the return bus trip was steamy due to a broken air conditioner.

The three counties in the region must make improvements in mass transit a priority through full funding and participation in the new Regional Transportation Authority, established this year by the Legislature.

Programs like “Seniors in Motion” should be expanded, to Broward and Miami-Dade counties and statewide. Drivers over 80 need a stronger incentive to stop using their cars long after vision, hearing, eye-hand coordination and judgment have begun to deteriorate.

But if older drivers are to give up their licenses and their wheels, they must have an inexpensive, reliable and convenient mass transit alternative.



Another of PalmTran’s Record Breaking Patrons Record-Breaking Ridership

Palm Tran, the public transportation system serving Palm Beach County Florida announced record-breaking ridership totals for both fixed route and paratransit operations for the first 6 months of Fiscal Year 2003. Passenger boardings for both fixed route and paratransit operations for the first 6 months of the fiscal year were the most ever recorded by Palm Tran for a half-year of operations.

For the 6-month period October 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003 Palm Tran fixed routes recorded 3,560,933 passenger boardings an increase of 13.27% from the same period in FY 2002. This double-digit ridership increase was accomplished with no increase in fixed route bus service level from the previous fiscal year. Perry J. Maull, Executive Director of Palm Tran, attributes the record breaking fixed route ridership totals to vigorous efforts to promote the use of bus passes by Palm Beach County residents eligible for transportation disadvantaged and Medicaid programs.

Palm Tran CONNECTION provides monthly bus passes to approximately 1,500 eligible clients paid for by the State of Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and 500 eligible clients of the Medicaid program. In addition, another 4,000 all day passes are provided to clients of these two programs each month.

For the first 6 months of the fiscal year Palm Tran CONNECTION’s paratransit service recorded 328,516 passenger boardings or an increase of 12.25%. This double-digit increase in ridership required an increase of paratransit vans in service from an average of 145 vans per day to an average of 155 vans per day. Paratransit ridership continues to increase based on improving system performance. Ridership is now averaging over 3,000 scheduled passenger trips per day up from 1,100 scheduled passenger trips per day of just 3 years ago when Palm Tran assumed complete control of the paratransit service.

HART Partners with Local University to Build Ridership

The University of South Florida (USF) has recently discovered what many other higher learning institutions throughout the nation already know: A partnership with public transit is a win-win situation.

Universities alleviate parking demands and public transit agencies gain more riders. It's a match made in transportation heaven.

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HARTline) recently partnered with USF's Parking and Transportation Services to offer a fare-free bus ride program for members of the USF community. The program allows all currently registered USF students, along with USF staff and faculty who have valid USF identification, to ride HARTline buses – anywhere – for free. (The fare-free rides are not applicable on HARTline's express routes.)

USF pays HART for rides taken through the Bus Ride Program with revenues from the Parking and Transportation Services division. Riders need only show their USF ID card to the bus operator to participate. A special bus pass or fare card is not required.

More than 50 colleges and universities throughout the United States are participating in similar relationships with their public transit agencies. According to a 1997-1998 study of these types of "unlimited access" or "u-pass" programs, not only did free transit service reduce parking demands and increase students' access to the campus, it also helps colleges and universities recruit and retain students.

On the plus side for transit agencies, the study concluded, was increased ridership and a reduction of the operating cost per rider.

In its first month of inception, the USF Fare-Free Bus Ride program had more than 14,400 rides taken by USF students, faculty and staff. It has grown to more than 21,000 rides in less than a year.

HARTline, in cooperation with USF, created a brochure detailing the USF Fare-Free Bus Ride Program. The brochure was inserted into the USF Oracle newspaper at the start of the

semester and placed at locations frequented by the USF community. The program is also featured on both USF and HARTline's Web sites and flyers advertise it at all the shelters for the USF Bull Runner, the on-campus shuttle service.

For more information about the USF Fare-Free Bus Ride Program visit www.hartline.org or www.usf.edu/parking_services/.

Jill Cappadoro is the Director of Public Relations for the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority

VOTRAN Introduces New Low-Floor Buses

VOTRAN recently put eight new low-floor buses into use in West Volusia. The buses offer convenience for passengers and lower maintenance and repair costs for VOTRAN. The buses feature lower floors, the "talking bus" announcement system, high visibility amber head signs, bike racks and on-board surveillance cameras.

"The transit operators and mechanics are pleased with the low floors," said Tom Stringer, assistant

general manager of operations and maintenance. "They are easier to operate and have fewer maintenance concerns."

The low-floor buses, from California-based bus manufacturer Gillig Corporation, have floors lower than typical buses and the front end of the bus actually lowers during stops for easier boarding. The 29-foot bus has a more efficient wheelchair ramp instead of a wheelchair lift. The ramp is faster to use and requires significantly less

maintenance. Each bus has a seating capacity of 28 passengers with two wheelchair positions.

All of the buses were put into service in the West Volusia area because VOTRAN has limited maintenance capabilities in West Volusia.

VOTRAN also added three Gillig Phantoms to the fleet in East Volusia. These 35-foot buses have a seating capacity of 37 with two wheelchair positions.

Space Coast Receives APTA Award

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) named Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT) as the Outstanding Public Transit System in America for 2003 in its category. SCAT was recognized in Category II, transit systems that transport 1,000,000 to 4,000,000 passenger trips per year. This category contains over 125 transit systems nationwide.

SCAT was recognized by APTA for the variety of services offered to meet the transportation needs in Brevard County. SCAT began service in 1974 when Brevard County joined with several Human Services agencies coordinated their transportation services. To this day, the target market of SCAT's services is the Senior and Disabled citizens of Brevard County.

To meet the needs of Brevard County, SCAT provides Fixed Route Bus Service to the General Public, Contract Bus Service to Human Service Agencies, Transportation Disadvantaged, Medicaid and ADA transportation door to door transportation. SCAT also provides Florida's largest vanpool fleet that leases vehicles to commuter and Human Services agencies and Volunteers in Motion, a program in which volunteers provide transportation and escort service to frail and elderly citizens.

SCAT was acknowledged by APTA for its excellent safety record, customer service, marketing, women and minority advancement, innovative programs and overall ridership improvement.

Overall system ridership has grown from 881,000 passenger trips in 2000, to 1,137,000 trips in 2002. The fixed route service alone has increased from 302,322 trips to 446,398 during the same period.

"We're pleased that our team efforts

between SCAT, our contractors and our funding partners like Florida Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration are being recognized," said Jim Liesenfelt, Transit Director. "Of course, we also know that we have a long way to go to meet all the transportation needs in Brevard County."

Wes Watson, Executive Director of the Florida Public Transportation Association said, "This award to SCAT, and others to Florida transit systems, show the calibre of management of our system's directors. It also shows a local commitment to public transit even in the face of scarce resources. Congratulations to Jim Liesenfelt, the Space Coast staff and Brevard County officials for this prestigious and well deserved award."

Space Coast Area Transit is the fourth system in the State of Florida to be recognized by APTA. Sarasota County Area Transit, Votran and Lynx have all been previously awarded as the Outstanding Public Transit System.

St. Lucie County Passes MSTU

For the first time in the history of Florida, a countywide Municipal Service Taxing Unit (MSTU) has been passed to provide a dedicated local funding source for public transportation.

The MSTU was passed to fund public transportation in St. Lucie County.

St. Lucie County has contracted for transit services since 1992, and has provided matching funds for vehicles and the Transportation Disadvantaged grant. Various state and federal grants have funded operating and capital costs. A new census designation combined the populations of St. Lucie and Martin counties and created an urbanized area of more than 200,000 population. Areas of more than 200,000 population are ineligible for Federal Transit Administration operating assistance. This linking with Martin County occurred without advance warning, and therefore, took both counties by surprise and left them unprepared to meet operational expenses.

The consultant firm of Tindale-Oliver & Associates came to St. Lucie County's aid by conducting a transit funding study that examined various methods of providing dedicated

sources of local funding for public transit.

On June 6, 2002, the Board of County Commissioners, the Fort Pierce City Commission and the Port St. Lucie Council held a workshop to discuss the issue. The consensus was to create a MSTU, which is essentially a mechanism for using ad valorem taxes without counting towards the general millage cap for the county (10 mills).

The MSTU did not require a referendum, and the governing body of

the MSTU is the Board of County Commissioners.

The Board of County Commissioners set a millage of .09 mills for the MSTU at its annual budget hearings in July. This means a resident with a home valued at \$100,000 and a homestead exemption of \$25,000 would pay about \$6.75 per year. The MSTU is expected to raise about \$900,000 for transit in fiscal year 2003/04, and will continue funding transit for many years to come.



Dol-Fan Express Bus

Olindo Mare, kicker for the Miami Dolphins, encourages fans to "Kick Traffic" and ride Broward County Transit's Dol-Fan Express bus service to the Miami-Dolphins games.

South Miami-Dade Busway Rides High on Ridership Success

You see it every weekday. Frustrated drivers sitting in traffic gridlock along U.S. 1. An increasing number of drivers, however, are quickly discovering a better alternative –the South Miami-Dade Busway.

The busway is an exclusive 8.2-mile segment of two-way lanes that run parallel to U.S.1.

Express buses quickly shuttle passengers from as far south as Florida City to the Dadeland South Station, where transit users can connect to the Metrorail system that now runs 24 hours a day.

Those who ride on the busway can shave 20 to 25 minutes off their daily commute. Miami-Dade Transit synchronizes bus arrivals and departures with the rail schedule to offer customers a seamless connection to Metrorail, easing travel to downtown Miami and surrounding business and commercial areas.

Since its opening in 1997, boardings along the busway have increased significantly: 71% on weekdays and 130% on weekends. During peak traffic hours, buses run every three minutes along the segment north of 152nd Street, and every 7.5 minutes south of 168th Street. On June 8, the Busway MAX route became one of 11 bus routes that provide 24-hour



service. Now transit riders are not only spending less time on the road, but they can travel from one end of the county to the other at any time.

“It’s this combination of services that will play a key role in reducing the amount of traffic we see on our roads today. Miami-Dade Transit is making every effort to make it more convenient for people to use transit,” said Roosevelt Bradley, director of Miami-Dade Transit.

The success of the busway is expected to increase with the addition of 11.5 miles of the exclusive bus lanes. The \$88.8 million extension, which extends from Cutler Ridge to Homestead and Florida City, began construction in November 2002. Along with expansion of the busway, U.S.1 also is under reconstruction from

S.W. 112th Avenue to S.W. 264th Street to vastly relieve traffic backups and improve the road’s support infrastructure.

The first phase of the expansion is right on schedule and on budget, with the second phase scheduled to start summer 2004, said Scott Brand, spokesperson for Pistorino & Alam, the engineering firm hired to work as a consultant on the project. He said they are estimating the project’s completion by late summer 2005.

According to construction plans, the busway extension will have five bridges; another 26 bus stations replete with amenities, such as telephones and newspaper racks; landscaping the length of the project, which includes plants native to Florida; and a continuation of the South Florida Greenway, a bike path spanning to the southern end of the state.

Once completed, the busway is expected to ease commuting for thousands of Miami-Dade residents. The finished product consisting of 56 stations and nearly 20 miles of bus-only lanes will help promote and maintain a clean-air environment, alleviate traffic congestion, and provide better transportation alternatives for all of South Florida.

JTAuthority Bus Ridership Shows Steady Increase

Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) bus ridership is showing a steady increase over the past ten months since October 2002. Bus ridership has increased an average of 5 percent monthly over the last fiscal year. Ridership showed a 10 percent increase for the month of June and a 9 percent rise for July in 2003.

“These numbers are significant for JTA and meets our vision of providing excellent service to our customers,” said JTA Executive Director Michael J. Blaylock.

The increase in ridership can be attributed to service change improvements that have been

implemented throughout the year. Included in these changes are the addition of Interliners, buses that offer one fare and no transfer connections across town, and the move toward high frequency corridors.

JTA is a \$90 million dollar agency with an active fleet of 180 buses and more than 50 bus lines, four downtown

trolley lines, a paratransit service and an elevated Skyway system combining for a total of an estimated 52 million annual passenger miles.

GILLIG
CORPORATION

GARY WILLMS
MANAGER TRANSPORTATION MARKETING

25800 CLAWITTER ROAD
HAYWARD, CA 94545

TEL: (510) 264-5020
FAX: (510) 785-6819
E-MAIL: gwillms@gillig.com

Palm Tran Hires New Manager of Maintenance

Palm Tran, Palm Beach County's mass transit system, announces the hiring of a new member of its management team. Joining Palm Tran as Maintenance Manager is John "Butch" Sibley. Sibley comes to Palm Tran from Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) in Tampa where he was the Technical Services Coordinator for the Maintenance Department. Sibley began his transit career with Hudson Transit Lines in Mahwah,

New Jersey in 1978. He went to work for HART in 1982 as a Mechanic I. Over the 21 years that he was with HART he has held just about every position available. Sibley was on the Executive Board of the ATU Local 1593 from 1991 to 1997 and served as Executive Vice President. He joined HART's management team in 1997 as a Maintenance Training Instructor. Sibley attended St. Petersburg College.



John "Butch" Sibley

JTA's Mike Blaylock Announces Key Organizational Initiatives

Michael Blaylock, Executive Director/CEO of the Jacksonville Transportation Authority, announced organizational changes designed to reflect the recent redirection of the JTA management approach. The improvements reflect Blaylock's new vision for the JTA and complement the long-range strategic planning process instituted after his appointment in April 2002.

"I am very excited to bring in a number of talented and skilled professionals to help lead the JTA team as we embark on a new era," said Blaylock.

Blaylock announced the following moves on the JTA team:

- Deirdre Kyle, Chief Operating Officer. Kyle will be primarily responsible for supporting the day-to-day activities of the senior staff and will report directly to Blaylock. Kyle will also be responsible for providing primary support for the JTA's management assessment audit.

- Daniel Gulliver, Chief Financial Officer. Gulliver will serve as the Authority's senior financial officer. He will have responsibility for all finance, accounting and information technology issues and report directly to Blaylock.

Blaylock announced that Gulliver and Kyle will join he and Deputy

Executive Director Matt Dominy on the Senior Executive Team for the JTA.

- Steve Arrington, Director of Strategic Planning and Resource Development. Arrington moves from an interim role in the same capacity to a permanent position. He is responsible for overseeing all short- and long-range planning initiatives for the Authority including service planning, new market development, parking, capital facilities, and local, state and federal legislative initiatives.

- Jacquie Gibbs, Director of Administration. Gibbs will oversee human resources, procurement, contract compliance, risk management, inventory and stores, and the print shop.

- Tom Jury, JTM President. Jury, who is already serving as president of JTM (Jax Transit Management), will continue to serve in this capacity as well as in an expanded scope for the position. The additional role will include management of all mass transit operating units of the Authority.

- Mike Crittenden, JTM Vice President. Crittenden will assist Tom Jury in managing the operating units. He is a highly regarded transit professional with over 20 years of experience,

including serving as General Manager of Albany Transit Systems in Georgia.

- Mike Miller, Director of External Affairs. Miller will be responsible for external affairs, including government relations and local, state and federal lobbying initiatives, as well as community outreach regarding Better Jacksonville Plan projects.

- Maria Williams, Manager of Market Development. Williams will be responsible for directing and overseeing the JTA's program management functions for all marketing activities and services.

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority is Northeast Florida's leader in providing effective, coordinated and integrated multimodal transportation solutions. The JTA manages the design and construction of dozens of road and bridge building projects—including 32 funded through The Better Jacksonville Plan—as well as the region's mass transit system of buses, trolleys, shuttles and the Skyway Express. The Authority is also leading the effort to develop an integrated regional rapid transit solution to meet the First Coast's future needs.

The First Installment of the Half Penny Proceeds are Distributed to Municipalities

The first ever transfer of Transit Surtax proceeds was made, totaling \$3,862,752, to fifteen municipalities of Miami-Dade County.

Fifteen of Miami-Dade's thirty-three municipalities, incorporated before November 5, 2002, as stipulated in the People's Transportation Plan, have signed the Municipal Interlocal Agreement and have provided complete documentation for receipt of the funds (Table A). These payments were processed as soon as the municipalities submitted complete documentation to the OPTM. In addition, OPTM has developed a municipal contacts database to assure responsiveness and prompt

assistance to concerned municipalities.

On May 16, 2003, The Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust (CITT) reviewed and forwarded the Municipal Interlocal Agreement to the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), who approved it during their May 20th session.

The Municipal Interlocal Agreement is a pre-negotiated contract between Miami-Dade County and the Dade League of Cities to promptly distribute funds to the eligible municipalities. This agreement allows all Miami-Dade municipalities executing it, to receive and expend their prorated share of the 20 percent Municipal share of the

proceeds generated from the Transit Surtax. The prorated share is determined by the ratio of each municipality's population to the total population in all eligible municipalities. The Municipal Interlocal Agreement requires the municipalities to apply 80 percent of their prorated share

to transportation and 20 percent to transit uses, such as circulator buses, bus shelters or other transit-related infrastructure.

By a margin of more than two to one, Miami-Dade voters overwhelmingly approved the People's Transportation Plan on November 5, 2002. The referendum calls for a half-penny Transit Surtax which creates a dedicated funding source exclusively for transportation. The Transit Surtax stipulates that 20 percent of the generated proceeds will be distributed annually to those municipalities existing as of November 5, 2002. Cities that incorporate after November 5, 2002, must individually negotiate with the county for a share of the County's 80 percent of the generated proceeds; the Municipal share will remain at 20 percent.

A critical part of the People's Transportation Plan was the creation of a CITT. The CITT will oversee the implementation of the \$17 billion transportation program and work with OPTM to plan, construct, and manage transportation improvements.

Table A

MUNICIPAL TRANSIT ENHANCEMENT FUNDS DISTRIBUTION
20% Municipal Share

Jurisdiction	Current Amount Paid	First year \$30,000,000(*) Annualized
Bal Harbour Village	\$25,648	\$90,144
Coral Gables	\$331,307	\$1,161,675
El Portal	\$19,549	\$68,892
Hialeah	\$1,792,605	\$6,252,136
Hialeah Gardens	\$152,891	\$534,149
Homestead	\$254,323	\$877,792
Key Biscayne	\$82,921	\$288,258
Miami Lakes	\$188,283	\$616,248
Miami Shores	\$80,844	\$283,448
Miami Springs	\$106,237	\$371,879
North Miami	\$465,038	\$1,622,095
Palmetto Bay	\$187,989	\$659,105
Sweetwater	\$110,532	\$387,533
Virginia Gardens	\$18,240	\$63,810
West Miami	\$46,345	\$161,073
TOTAL	\$3,862,752	

(* To be distributed among the 33 existing municipalities as of November 5, 2002)

Board Meeting Retreat Focuses on Business

At our Board Meeting and Retreat on August 28th, the Board decided to emphasize transit's impact on business and economic development for the coming year. A study by CUTR, funded by FDOT, will depend on input from our transit system's to flesh out what will hopefully be a compendium of ways, and examples, of how transit in Florida relates to the state's economic well being. Together, with an aggressive Strategic Transit Plan by new FDOT Secretary, Jose Abreu, transit in Florida faces an exciting, and very challenging year ahead.

From The Capitol

Continued from page 1

transportation organizations to try to protect the TTF. Hopefully next year the group will be more successful.

Success, or lack of it, comes down to persuading the "folks back home" that curtailing transportation (and transit) spending is the economic equivalent of eating your seed corn. Transportation directly affects the economy and the ability to attract new businesses. This is one time where at

least a penny or two of new gas tax (\$95 million per penny) would be well worth any political pain. An interesting fact, is that so far as we know, not a single legislator in modern history has ever been beaten in an election due to a vote for a gas tax. And the last two gas tax increases were in election year cycles. Please continue to talk to your local delegations that balancing the budget on the back of Transportation or Transit is not the wise thing to do.

Free Okaloosa Island/Destin Shuttle Offers Expanded Service

The new free Okaloosa Island/Destin shuttles took to the streets of south Okaloosa County for a second season on Friday, May 23, 2003.

The shuttle service slogan, "Hunt for souvenirs, not parking spaces" helped to inspire more than 38,000 passengers to put down their car keys last summer and opt for this safe, clean, and responsible transportation alternative.

"The program was so successful last summer that we've added 2 additional buses, for a total of 8, and new service areas this year," says Okaloosa County Commission Chairman Paula Riggs. "This season we have approximately 100 stops which include restaurants, attractions, hotels, shopping complexes, public facilities, libraries and more."

May and June 2003 passenger counts total 22,018 "This is a significant

increase when you consider that means more than 20,000 less people were in cars along congested areas in just over one month. I think word is getting out about what great service the shuttle provides and I also believe the addition



of two new buses and the additional new routes have contributed considerably," says Riggs.

The Okaloosa Island /Destin Shuttle Service is provided from Uptown Station

in Fort Walton Beach to the Boardwalk on Okaloosa Island. At the Boardwalk, riders may catch additional shuttles that will provide continuous service throughout Destin. This year's additions include service along Gulf Shore Drive and along Scenic Highway 98 to the Walton County Line.

"A survey conducted at the end of last season indicated that many riders were utilizing the service for not only leisure purposes, but as a means of transportation to work as well. Clearly this program is a benefit to visitors and to area residents and I hope this year even more people will take advantage of the free service," added Riggs.

Funding for the shuttle service is being provided by the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Council and Florida Department of Transportation.

Okaloosa County Transit Receives Innovation of the Year Award at the 11th Annual Transportation Training and Technology Conference

The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged awarded Okaloosa County Transit the "Innovation of the Year" award at its 11th Annual Transportation Training and Technology Conference. The Commission said, "The Board of County Commissioners and Okaloosa County Transit have consistently partnered with the local community to improve transportation options for the citizens of Okaloosa County."

The most recent innovation has been the collaboration with the Okaloosa County Tourist Development Council (TDC) to purchase vehicles to expand the Okaloosa/Destin shuttles.

Through building a relationship with the TDC, over the next several years, additional vehicles will be added to the existing service.

The TDC has been instrumental in obtaining the support of transit property owners and community leaders. Some TDC Board members are property owners and managers and have encouraged others to participate in the development of routes and promotion.

Okaloosa County has provided strong support for public transportation and transportation disadvantaged services in recent years. In 1999, OCT had a fleet of approximately 50

vehicles, which were used primarily for transportation disadvantaged services. Since then, OCT has designed and implemented deviated fixed route services in partnerships with Okaloosa County, the Workforce Development Board, and the Tourist Development Council.

The Commission stated at its awards banquet on August 7, 2003, that "through these innovative and strategic efforts, Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners and Okaloosa County Transit have improved and increased services in Okaloosa County and undoubtedly deserve the distinction of Innovation of the Year."

Tri-Rail Buys Land for Intermodal Station, Mixed-Use Development

The South Florida Regional Transportation Authority/Tri-Rail recently purchased a 6.68-acre site in Boca Raton for \$2.7 million to build an intermodal transit station and associated mixed-use, transit-oriented development.

The construction of Boca Raton's station is part of the final phase of a \$333 million project to double-track the South Florida Rail Corridor. Once completed, Tri-Rail

trains will operate on 20-minute headways during rush hour and later in the evening and more frequently on weekends, the agency said. Tri-Rail's ridership of approximately 10,000 people a day is expected to triple by 2006.

During the first phase of the mixed-use transit facility project, slated to open in fall 2004, the authority plans to build five bus bays, an automobile drop-off area,

parking spaces, boarding platforms, and landscaped green space, among other things. The second phase will include 20,000 square feet of office space and 40,000 to 50,000 square feet of commercial space, potentially turning into a six-story building, and additional surface parking. The estimated cost of developing the property into a mixed-use transit facility is \$10.3 million.



TCRA's Board Members

*Executive Director Joe Giulietti joins TCRA's board members for one final photo (From left to right, Mr. Giulietti, Marie Horenburger, Commissioner Bruno Barreiro, Chair Michael D. Masanoff, James A. Cummings, David Rush, Rick Chesser and Commissioner Lori Nance Parrish. *Not pictured: Commissioner Jeff Koons and Allen C. Harper).*

Florida Public Transportation Association

P. O. Box 10168
Tallahassee, FL 32302

FIRST CLASS