Innovation

Golden Empire Transit
Golden Empire Transit Book on Bus Program

Golden Empire Transit (GET) created an innovative book program by turning a bus into a mini mobile library stocked with books primarily geared toward children ranging from infant to 3rd grade. The books make the daily commute more fun for children and less daunting for parents who may have restless children.

GET holds book drives in partnership with Barnes and Noble, where the agency parks a bus outside the store. Patrons can purchase and donate a new book for the agency and receive a 10 percent discount on their own purchases. It’s a win-win for everyone.

Pace Suburban Bus
Pace Suburban Bus and Illinois State Toll Highway Authority I-90 Project

Pace Suburban Bus and the Illinois Tollway forged a unique partnership to work together to expand public transit options, make roadway advances and improve overall mobility on the Jane Addams Memorial Tollway (I-90).

The partnership set a new standard for Pace and the 35 million passengers the agency serves in 200 municipalities across the Chicago area. It increased ridership, improved on-time performance and provided greater visibility for the suburban bus division of the Regional Transit Authority (RTA).

As the transportation sector as a whole looks for ways to reduce congestion as development increases, and as the public sector aspires to reduce carbon emissions and contain costs, this type of partnership is not just innovative, but imperative.

Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement

Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority

Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority’s (LAVTA) fixed-route bus service area covers 40 square miles and includes the cities of Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton in Alameda County, approximately 35 miles east of San Francisco. LAVTA contracts for the operation and maintenance of all fixed-route and paratransit services, which are provided with a fleet of 60 buses and 18 paratransit vehicles.

At the beginning of each year, LAVTA’s operations team establishes a calendar of safety priorities. Every other month a “Safety Stand-Down” is scheduled to expand on the safety message of the month with visual cues, videos and handouts, expanded management presence at pull-outs, and road supervisors stationed at key transfer points to question drivers on their understanding of the safety focus.

Central Ohio Transit Authority

Providing more than 4 million and fewer than 20 million annual passenger trips

Cleaner and more efficient transit vehicles are at the core of the Central Ohio Transit Authority’s (COTA) sustainability initiatives. COTA is committed to transitioning its entire diesel fleet to compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric by 2025. At the end of 2019, more than half of COTA’s 321 fixed-route buses were powered by CNG. The agency will replace 28 diesel buses with CNG buses each year until the diesel fleet is fully retired.

In 2019, COTA launched its first employee resource group which performed 19 community projects in its first year. COTA’s veteran workforce is more than 10 percent, higher than the national average.

COTA continues to improve safety measures in its facilities and on the street. Initiatives such as safety pop-ups and continuing education and training helped decrease the number of preventable accidents from 0.61 per 100,000 miles in 2017 to 0.25 in 2018. During the same time, the rate of employee injuries decreased from 2.28 to 2.27. Safety and wellness fairs are held every May in all COTA facilities. COTA also received this award in 2018.

Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Texas

Providing 20 million or more annual passenger trips

Safety is the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County’s (METRO) top priority. Ensuring the well-being of passengers, the public and employees is something the agency focuses on every day. METRO’s board of directors has made a commitment to take proactive agencywide approaches to enhance, implement and track safety practices. In 2018, METRO was the recipient of an APTA Gold Award for Safety as a “model for emergency response” for its proactive efforts during Hurricane Harvey in 2017.

The use of compressed natural gas (CNG) buses is also a safe and affordable method for improving air quality. In 2018, METRO celebrated a significant achievement, traveling 10 million miles with its fleet of CNG buses, reducing more than 3,000 tons of nitrogen oxide. By adopting clean-burning fuels, like CNG, METRO has reduced the amount of harmful pollutants in Houston’s air. Today, the authority has 70 CNG buses in its fleet.

METRO values the diversity of its employees and the unique perspectives they bring to the organization. Bonuses and incentives are offered to bilingual operators and dispatchers. METRO also celebrates diversity through a series of cultural events throughout the year, including Black History Month, Women’s History Month, Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, Hispanic Heritage Month and Veterans Day.

Local Distinguished Service

Sharon Bulova

During a long and distinguished 30-year career, Sharon Bulova, recently retired chairman of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, helped shape public transportation options in the Washington, DC, Metropolitan area. Bulova helped found the Virginia Railway Express (VRE) commuter rail line in 1988 and oversaw the massive redevelopment of Tyson’s Corner and the launch of the Silver Line. An original, and the longest-serving member of the VRE Operations Board, Bulova worked diligently to help VRE overcome funding shortfalls, indemnification hurdles and opposition from private railroads.

Bulova began working on VRE in 1984 while she served as an aide to Annandale District Supervisor Audrey Moore, whose seat she won in 1987. In 1988, Bulova became a member of the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission, which advances a robust and reliable public transit network to support communities in Northern Virginia.

She helped secure funding for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Bulova is particularly proud of One Fairfax, a joint social- and racial-equity policy adopted by the county’s board of supervisors and the school board in 2017. It commits schools and the county to intentionally consider equity when making policies or delivering programs and services.

All Fairfax County agencies, including the Department of Transportation, have developed Equity Impact Plans and implemented the One Fairfax policy.

Outstanding Public Transportation Business Member

Freddie Fuller II

For more than 23 years, Freddie Fuller II has amassed vast experience in the private sector and has used his education, expertise and relationships to engage and connect organizations and individuals within the public transportation industry. He is currently a vice president at Jacobs, leading new business development for transit and rail in the Mid-Atlantic, Southeast and Canada, with a focus on electronic payment systems. He also serves as the liaison between Jacobs and organizations including the African American Mayors Association, Community Leaders of America, International City/County Management Association, National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Fuller is a strong business advocate, and staunch supporter of diversity and inclusion with APTA and other industry organizations. From 2018 to the present, he began simultaneously serving a three-year term as secretary/treasurer of APTA and a two-year term as national board chair for the Conference of Minority Transportation Officials. He is a graduate of Leadership APTA and was selected as an Eno Transportation Foundation Fellow.

Fuller has served on APTA’s Business Members Board of Governors (BMBG), and in 2015, he became chair of the BMBG Legislative Committee. That same year, he was elected to his first three-year term on the APTA Executive Committee. In 2017, he was named vice chair of the BMBG Budget Committee and appointed to the
Its 2020 Award Recipients

APTA Finance Committee. He also currently serves as chair of the Finance Commit-
tee and is a member of APTA’s American Public Transportation Foundation Board of
Directors and chair of its Finance Committee.

Prior to joining Jacobs, Fuller served in leadership roles with The Bus in Prince
George’s County, MD; Greater Richmond Transit Authority in Richmond, VA; Cubic
Transportation Systems; and his own consulting practice.

Outstanding Public Transportation Board Member

Sharon McBride

Sharon McBride has served nearly 23 years on the Greater
Peoria Mass Transit District (GPMTD) Board of Trustees.
She assumed her role as trustee on May 5, 1997. McBride
represents West Peoria and is appointed by the township
supervisor. As Trustee, McBride focused her efforts on
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) mandates so they
would be met in a timely fashion.

McBride was elected board chair from 1999 until 2007,
and then served again from May 2014 until May 2016. She was elected board secre-
tary in May 2016, and she continues to serve in that position today.

While serving as GPMTD chair, she oversaw the building of the Transit Center,
which housed the first daycare center in Illinois.

McBride is an active APTA member and has served on the association’s board of
directors, and as part of the Executive Committee.

Throughout her career, she has mentored many students, utilizing her master’s
degree in counseling, especially during her tenure at Bradley University as well as
her years teaching a technical communication course at Illinois Central College.

Outstanding Public Transportation Manager

Nathaniel P. Ford Sr.

When Nathaniel P. Ford Sr. joined the Jacksonville Trans-
portation Authority (JTA) in 2012, public confidence in the
transportation system was low, on-time performance was
below 70 percent and bus stops, shelters and facilities
needed upgrades. In addition, most bus routes had service
frequencies of one hour or more, a factor complicated by
a circuitous system network that was outdated and under
serving the community.

A second-generation transportation professional who had earned a reputation as a
change-agent and visionary at positions in New York, Atlanta and San Francisco,
Ford quickly made his mark at Jacksonville. Today, under his leadership, the JTA is
recognized as a mobility integrator that connects riders to multimodal options.

Ensuring diversity and inclusiveness in the workforce, and in contracting, has been
one of the hallmarks of Ford’s career. Through the JTA’s Disadvantaged Business
Enterprise (DBE) program, the agency exceeded its goal of at least 16 percent par-
ticipation of qualified firms owned and operated by socially and economically dis-
advantaged individuals in the award and administration of DBE-assisted contracts.

Through 2016, JTA consistently reached an impressive 25 percent DBE participation
rate. That number increased in 2017 with a 34 percent goal; in 2018 with a 33 per-
cent goal and in 2019 with a 31 percent goal.

Ford has been a very active leader in APTA, including serving as secretary/treasurer
and as vice chair from 2016-17 and chair from 2017-18.

Hall of Fame

J. Barry Barker

J. Barry Barker retired Dec. 1, 2018 after more than 40 years
advancing public transportation at the national, state and
local levels and nearly 25 years as executive director of the
Transit Authority of River City in Louisville, KY.

Throughout his long and distinguished career, Barker has
held leadership roles on APTA’s board and many committees
over 30 years. Upon his retirement, in a proclamation from
APTA, he was cited for his “many significant accomplish-
ments for public transportation and the customers we serve,” among his positions
of chairman, Legislative Committee; vice chairman for Legislative Affairs; chairman,
Sustainability Committee; and vice president, Marketing and Communications Com-
nittee. He served on the Diversity Council and was active in its development and
the advancement of the Leadership APTA program. He was vice chair of the LGBTQ
Task Force and remains an active member of APTA to this day.

Barker’s job performance, many awards and recognitions, and his extensive
engagement with non-profit organizations underscore his personal, and APTA’s,
core values of leadership, integrity, excellence, diversity, inclusiveness, fairness and
equality, teamwork, professionalism and accountability.

Dr. Beverly Scott

Dr. Beverly Scott is recognized as a trailblazer, a thoughtful
and inspirational leader and a passionate advocate for the
betterment of the public transportation industry through her
efforts to ensure training and opportunities are made available
to young and disadvantaged individuals, many of whom have
gone on to become leaders in their own right. Scott has held
key leadership roles in some of North America’s largest public
transportation systems in Texas; New York, NY; New Jersey;
Washington, DC; Rhode Island; California; Georgia; and Massachusetts.

In April 2015, Scott retired from the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.
She founded and serves as CEO of Beverly Scott Associates, LLC — “People and
Communities Matter.” That tagline says much about Scott, particularly her passion
for people, workforce development and creating opportunities for the underprivileged
and people of color. She continues to work tirelessly to promote civic engagement,
social responsibility, equity and inclusion. Scott is a frequent speaker on leadership,
workforce development and the urgent need for infrastructure investment.

Her dedicated service to APTA dates to the earliest stages of her career. She has
been a tireless advocate for the association and has served on many committees,
including as APTA chair, chair of the Legislative Committee, Diversity Council
and Award’s Committee, to name a few.

Celia Kupersmith

For 34 years, Celia Kupersmith has been a major force in the
growth and development of the public transit industry. To
this day, multiple systems and riders alike benefit from her
efforts to foster ethical leadership, improve service quality,
enhance multimodal coordination, and elevate transit as a
key network component. In predominantly multi-modal
settings, she has served as a planner; marketing director;
MPO chief; bus, rail, and ferry manager; general manager; and executive recruiting
consultant. Her most successful achievement, however, was her stewardship of the
iconic Golden Gate Bridge and its supporting transit systems. Kupersmith’s career
includes key leadership roles across North America in Texas; Nevada; California; and
Washington State.

She has been very active in APTA throughout her long career. While working at
the RTC in Reno, NV, she served as vice chair of APTA’s Small Operations Committee
and, later, as vice chair of the Human Resources Committee within APTA’s Execu-
tive Committee. In that role, she led the effort to develop operational mechanics for
Leadership APTA, ultimately serving for years as chair of that program. She remains
involved as a member of the Human Resources Committee to this day.

While at Golden Gate, Kupersmith was elected to be chair of APTA—only the
third woman and the youngest individual to serve in that role. During her tenure
she led efforts on reauthorization and continued to enhance the Diversity Council’s
effectiveness.

Paul Jablonski (awarded posthumously)

Through a career that spanned more than 40 years in the
public transportation industry, Paul Jablonski was a cham-
pion for transit. His influence and expertise was felt at transit
agencies across the east coast, the Midwest, the west coast
and overseas. He nurtured new transit systems, turned bro-
ken systems into winners, and was committed to learning and
sharing knowledge to help others succeed.

During his tenure, Jablonski oversaw advocacy efforts to
fully restore the State Transit Assistance program, putting to rest years of state raids
on transit funding that had significantly weakened public transit in California. Follow-
ing the enactment of the California Public Employees’ Pension Reform Act in 2013,
which led to a series of legal challenges that halted the flow of billions of dollars
in federal grants earmarked for California transit agencies, Jablonski led the develop-
ment of the plan to resolve the controversy and allow funding to flow once again.

Jablonski was deeply involved in APTA, serving as an at-large director on the
APTA Board of Directors, co-chair for the Public Transportation CEO Coordinating
Council Leadership and was a member of an additional 14 committees. Under his
leadership, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System won APTA’s Most Outstand-
ing Transit Agency of the Year award in 2009. In 2014, APTA honored him as Out-
standing Transportation Manager of the Year.