

RFTA Matters

The Roaring Fork Transportation Authority Newsletter

Winter 2011



DAN'S A WINNER!

RFTA IS PROUD to announce that our CEO Dan Blankenship was awarded the title "Colorado's 2011 Transit Administrator of the Year" by the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA).

This award is the highest and most prestigious award in Colorado's public transit industry and is reserved for individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to public transit within the state of Colorado.

Dan was recognized by fellow transit agencies from across the state at this year's CASTA Annual Fall Transit Conference & EXPO that was held in Steamboat Springs on September 9, 2011. He was nominated for his outstanding transit leadership and his innovative accomplishments in leading RFTA to new heights by becoming the nation's first rural bus rapid transit (BRT) system with its VelociRFTA.

This award is no stranger to Blankenship. He was a recipient of this award back in 2009 for making RFTA one of the top leaders in hybrid technology by being one of the cleanest and greenest fleets in the Western U.S. Dan supported the efforts of Kenny Osier, Maintenance Director, to make RFTA the greenest fleet going through the pursuit of hybrid technology and the use of biodiesel as a fuel.



Dan Blankenship, RFTA's CEO and CASTA Winner.

As the CEO for RFTA for the past 22 years, Blankenship's

Connecting our region with transit and trails.

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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
PUBLISHED BY THE
ROARING FORK
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accomplishments have led to many outstanding awards and honors for RFTA. In 1996, RFTA was named the “Best Mass Transit System of North America” by Mass Transit Magazine. In 2003, 2006 and 2009, RFTA was awarded for “Large Transit Agency of the Year” by the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA). In 2008, RFTA’s Rio Grande Trail was awarded the “Outstanding Community Tourism Initiative” award during the 2008 Colorado Governor’s Tourism Conference. Additionally, RFTA’s Bike Express Bus was bestowed an award in 2008 which recognizes unusual and notable transit related accomplishments of individuals or agencies. To the best of our knowledge, the Bike Express buses are one of a kind.

Dan has accomplished many great things throughout his professional career with RFTA. He truly exemplifies what it means to be an outstanding public transportation leader – knowledgeable, dedicated and passionate. He has made RFTA one of the most successful public transit systems in the state of Colorado. We extend our congratulations and thanks to Dan. Thank you for serving as an example of dedication to transit and to the communities who utilize it.

GOOD SAMARITAN AWARD

CONGRATULATIONS to our own RFTA bus driver Leigh Guilfoyle who was presented with the “Pitkin County Cares Volunteer Service ‘Good Samaritan’ Award” on October 26, 2011 for his outstanding



RFTA Driver, Leigh Guilfoyle, receives the “Good Samaritan” award.

dedication and commitment as well as his acts of kindness toward the community. We really appreciate his hard work and service. Give him a pat on the back if you see him.

WE WANT YOU TO WORK WITH US!

RFTA WANTS TO HIRE LOCAL Colorado workers. If you, or someone you know, owns a small business and is looking for work, RFTA will have 60-100 contracts up for bid next year, many pertaining to the upcoming VelociRFTA BRT project.

The proposed BRT service will utilize the existing 40-mile Colorado State Highway 82 (SH 82) corridor between Glenwood Springs and

WE WANT YOU COLORADO TO WORK WITH US

Aspen, consists of nine stations, seven of which are located at existing RFTA local or express service stops, two new park and ride lots, and the expansion of one existing park and ride lot. The contracts will cover all aspects of daily bus operations, for example electricians, printing, cleaning, maintenance and construction. If you are interested, check out RFTA's BRT website at www.rftabrt.com or go to RFTA's main webpage and click on "Bus Rapid Transit."

All Request for Proposals (RFP)s will be advertised at this location. If you need additional information or help filling out the forms needed for procurement, please contact Amy Skinner at 970.384.4860 or email her at askinner@rfta.com. A Procurement Counselor with Colorado PTAC can also assist you with help filling out the necessary forms.

CNG FOR BRT?

IS RFTA SWITCHING to compressed natural gas (CNG)? RFTA is evaluating the feasibility of transitioning its fleet from one powered by diesel fuel to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG). From an environmental standpoint, there are trade-offs and many factors must be weighed to determine the extent to which natural gas is a more environmentally friendly transportation fuel than diesel. However, in terms of fuel prices and fuel price stability, it appears that CNG is a clear winner. There is a large domestic supply of natural gas and natural gas prices have been relatively low and stable over many years. Diesel fuel, on the other hand, is currently costing RFTA approximately \$3.25 per gallon and the price could be affected by major spikes in the years ahead, which could cripple RFTA.

RFTA has consulted with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to apprise them of RFTA's desire to make this change. In addition to a variety of financial, environmental, and procurement related issues, the FTA's primary concern is about how the change from clean-diesel technology to CNG might

affect the September 2013 project delivery schedule. Therefore, RFTA must conclusively demonstrate to the FTA that it has the financial and managerial wherewithal to make this transition without delaying the BRT project's planned fall 2013 opening date.

BRT UPDATE

AS REPORTED IN OCTOBER, the community development, land acquisition and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) permitting processes remain the critical path activities for the BRT project and a majority of RFTA staff efforts are now focused on these tasks. All of these activities are now lagging behind their originally scheduled completion dates. Some of the delays can be attributed to late finishes on activities that preceded these processes.

The addition of the feasibility analysis for converting the RFTA bus fleet, beginning with the BRT fleet, to Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) has added a new level of complexity to the project that is complicating the project schedule.

The combination of all of these factors has left very little flexibility in the overall project schedule and our ability to absorb any future issues or delays within the schedule has been greatly diminished. While we are still of the opinion that the September 2013 opening date for the BRT system can be met, a great deal of work still needs to be completed and the margin for error is becoming very thin.



The Invitation for Bids (IFB) for the construction of the BRT Stations and Park & Ride lots remains scheduled for release on December 1, 2011. December 1 is still likely the latest date that RFTA can begin the procurement process and still have a realistic chance of completing construction on time for the scheduled BRT system opening in September 2013. The procurement schedule shows a general contractor selected by March 1, 2012.

As the delays associated with property acquisition and community development approvals have erased most of the float time in the project, staff has begun planning for the possibility that there may be two completion dates for project construction. The first completion date would be for all of those project elements that are essential for service to begin in September 2013. The second completion date would be for all remaining project elements or those that are not essential for operation (i.e. expansion of the Basalt Park & Ride Lot, landscaping, station fit and finish items, etc.).

KIDS AND TRANSIT

THIS YEAR'S "Alternative Transportation Week" was the most successful ever. The overall 1st Place winner was Ms. Burket's 4th Grade Class at Carbondale's Crystal River Elementary with 271 non-car trips.

Each year RFTA sponsors this successful event that encourages students to recognize the benefits of using alternative transportation, such as riding the school bus, riding RFTA, walking or biking to school.

This event is held during the first week of October for many schools across the Roaring Fork Valley to celebrate



Colorado Walk to School Day (October 5th) and International Walk to School Month. During this week students are asked to count the number of trips they take each day without using a car. Participating classrooms keep track of student commute modes on a tally sheet. Elementary classes who log the highest use of alternative transportation win pizza parties and other great prizes.

Alternative transportation plays a vital role in our community and we thank all of those who participated and made this event such a success. You are making a difference in our community and our

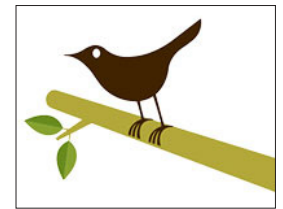
planet while you save money, get fit and enjoy life more. Using alternative transportation is an important step to a happier and healthier you and environment.

SOCIAL MEDIA

CHECK US OUT! RFTA is making it easy for you to stay connected with what's happening in the Roaring Fork Valley. Join us on Facebook, Twitter and our Blog. We are making it simpler for you to stay connected at all times to what's happening with RFTA and our community.



Social media sites have been found to be a highly useful tool to "spread the word" instantaneously with people within your community. Best of all, it's free and it's a great way to communicate to network with other folks at your convenience. Our rfta.com



homepage and latest news page have a live twitter feed going at all times. So stay connected with what's happening - "follow" us on Twitter, "like" us on Facebook, and add your helpful two cents to our blog!

RFTA AS THE DESIGNATED DRIVER

WE ARE ALL ACQUAINTED with the perils of drinking and driving. This holiday season we want to encourage locals and our visitors to think of RFTA as their designated driver, and use transit to keep our roads safe. When you combine drinking at holiday celebrations with unforgiving winter road conditions, you've got a deadly recipe. We want everyone to enjoy this most joyous season without the worry of driving after drinking. RFTA is a common sense solution to the problem. Let's remind folks to let us be their designated driver.

Additionally CDOT has some great free apps for android and iphones to help assess one's



let RFTA be your designated driver

If you plan on drinking, plan on RFTA.
Keep yourself and others safe.

Fare transit from Aspen to Rifle . Free within Aspen
Free between Aspen & Snowmass . Free on Ride Glenwood

970.925.8484 ☎ www.rfta.com



blood alcohol concentration. They are called “R U Buzzed?” and the Spanish version is called “Estas Tomado?” Download them for free today.

NICE JOB

THE NIGHT OF TUESDAY, November 8th, RFTA Driver Elmer Rodriquez witnessed an accident between Catherine’s Store and Blue Lake that almost involved his bus. He saw flames coming from an overturned car involved in the accident. Elmer grabbed a fire extinguisher and helped put out the flames. When the police arrived on the scene they commended Elmer for helping prevent a catastrophe. Nice job Elmer!

RFTA’S NEW FACE

RFTA HAS RECENTLY GOTTEN A FACELIFT! Due to the cost of re-wrapping our buses our rebranding of RFTA hasn’t been in the public eye, front and center yet.

However, with the City of Aspen’s new bus purchase we will soon be able to show off our new look. These photos were sent to us from our Director of Maintenance, Kenny Osier, who is in California right now during the “delivery” of our newly rebranded bus. This will be the eventual look of all of RFTA’s regular fleet. The rebranding of the buses will be a slow process over the next several years as we get new buses and funds allow.



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