Salvation Army Coat Drive

With temperatures dropping, snow falling and winds howling, there are folks who are less fortunate that must endure the inclement winter .

RFTA has partnered with the Salvation Army to offer help and comfort to those who need it in our community.

Blue donation barrels have been placed at the following RFTA facilities: AMF, GMF and the Carbondale/Bank.

If you have something you would like to donate place your gently used winter jackets and other winter wear in the barrels.

Winter hats, mittens, gloves, and winter socks will be accepted.

Facility crews will periodically take the clothing items to the Salvation Army so they may distribute to those in need.

Your donations to Salvation Army family stores help fund rehabilitation programs that heal addictions, change lives and restore families.

.

Thank you for considering contributions, and to make a difference is someone's life.

Remember to look at the details of your paycheck for any changes you had for 2022 benefit selections. If there might be any discrepancies or questions, contact HR.

BEHIND THE WHEEL

RFTA
ROARING FORK TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

RFTA BOARD

Pitkin County
Greg Poschman/ Francie Jacober

Town of Basalt
Bill Kane / Gary Tennenbaum

City of Aspen
Torre/Ward Hauenstein

Town of Carbondale
Dan Richardson/Ben Bohmfalk

Eagle County
Jeanne McQueeney/
Kathy Chandler-Henry

City of Glenwood Springs
Jonathan Godes/ Shelley Kaup

Town of New Castle
Art Riddile/Scott Owens

Town of Snowmass Village
Alyssa Shenk/ Bill Madsen

RFTA CEO
Dan Blankenship

RFTA COO
Kurt Ravenschlag

RFTA CFAO
Michael Yang

RFTA Human Resources and Marketing & Communications Departments

Linda Forgacs
Human Resources Director, 970-384-4952
Maria Vazquez
HR & Risk Mgmt. Analyst, 970-384-4950
Bonnie McLean
Benefits Manager, 970-384-4878
Kipling Gomez
HR Generalist, 970-384-4854
Debbie Alcorta
Housing Coordinator, 970-384-4875
Terri Rider
Administrative Assistant, 970-384-4889
Jamie Tatsuno
Communications Manager,
970-384-4864
Jennifer Balmes
Creative Communications Specialist
970-384-4871

Covid Corner

If you become sick, you must contact HR of your ailment so we may determine if you are allowed to return to work, or, if you must quarantine and schedule testing.

Covid cases are on the rise, and we want to protect you, your co-workers, and others you come in contact with.

Under Colorado's new paid sick leave law — dubbed the Healthy Families and Workplaces Act, ***RFTA will pay you to stay home when your illness is covid related; sickness, exposure, quarantining, isolating, reaction to the vaccination.***

Through this act, everyone has 80 paid sick hours available to them.

If you are out for covid reasons, the pay during this time is paid through RFTA, not your accrued sick hours. If you were unfortunate and were affected last year with covid and were paid HFWA funds, you are still eligible to have 80 hours available to you this year if you again are with covid issues.

The pay stubs on the HUB will appear to reduce your accrued sick hours. This is not so. The detail in payroll properly reflects the covid hours as HFWA, not sick.

We need and want you to please stay at home if you have any symptoms, do not assume it is your allergies, common head cold, etc. We want you to err on the side of caution, you will get paid. Please call HR and let us help you determine if you need to stay home, get tested and quarantine. You do not get penalized for calling in sick during this Pandemic. We need to stop the spread and we can only do it with your cooperation by not coming to work sick. We appreciate your loyalty and that you want to help out during this time when most departments are stretched thin, but bringing the virus to work to spread is not the answer even though your intentions are honorable.

Congratulations on the recent promotions

John Rushenberg has accepted the position of our new Rubey Park Clerk. He will be working Wednesdays through Fridays during the day. When you have an opportunity please congratulate him on this change in position. He is looking forward to being part of the customer service of RFTA's operations.

Congratulations to Barb Rey of Paratransit in her promotion to Operations Dispatch.

Congratulations to Brody Babcock, Mckenzie Covington and Matthew Davis being on being promoted to Lead Mechanic.

Finance wants everyone to be aware of the following dates:

- 2021 W-2's will be posted on the Doculivery website by January 31, 2022

- Please submit all 2021 related invoices to Accounts Payable by February 8, 2022.

New Hires

Timothy Williams – Accounting Manager

Tim comes to RFTA from the Hospitality industry after an accomplished 13-year career in luxury hotels and resorts. Tim most recently served as General Manager of Hyatt Residence Club Grand Aspen and has held numerous leadership roles in luxury hotels and resorts spanning stints in Florida, California, Colorado, Texas, St. Thomas, and the Cayman Islands. Tim recently completed his M.Sc. in Accounting from Boise State University and holds an undergraduate in Accounting from University of South Florida. In addition, Tim is currently pursuing his CPA license. Tim is originally from Texas and Florida and enjoys spending time with his wife and son, outdoor activities, collecting sports cards, and playing on his church music team.

Kipling Gomez – HR Generalist

Welcome to Kipling Gomez on his new role as HR Generalist. Kip is retired Air Force working 20 years and recently worked for Aspen Skico as The Senior HR Manager for The Limelight Hotels.

Kip is married with 3 boys and an Australian Shepherd dog named Penny.

Ryan MacGregor – IT Network Administrator

New Hires cont. Welcome the New RFTA Team Members

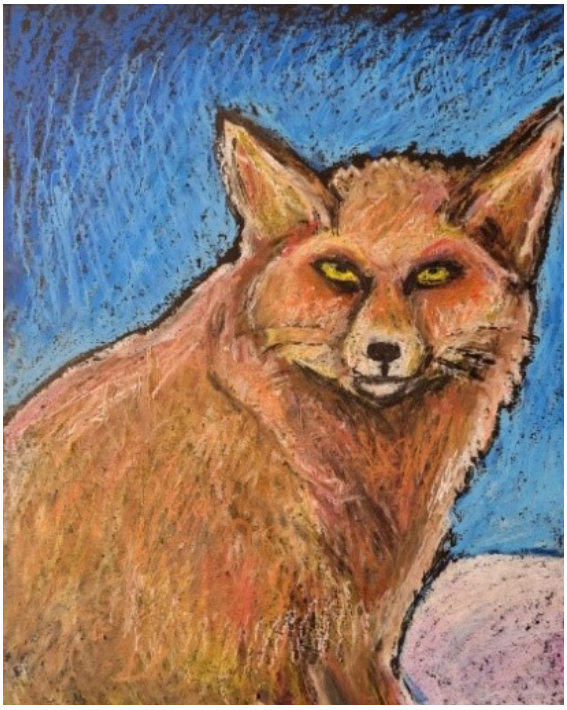
Vehicle Maintenance:
Brian Brooks – CDL Service Worker
Oscar Diaz Ponce – Transit Service Tech
Charles Mwamba – Transit Service Tech

Operations; CDL drivers:
Thomas Bell, William Crites, Alicia Davis, Dale Elwood, Douglas Fleury, Roberto Gonzales, Andrew Haupert, Stephen Horn, Ashlyn Jones, Rueann Lyles, John Mathesen, Nathaniel McCarver, Thomas McMichael, Brandon Miller, Dawn Patton, Sade Roberts, Tiffany Saunders, Christopher Spence, Andrew Spinder, Chaquita Walker, Mary Washington

Operations; Non-CDL drivers:
Ana Argueta, Gloria Del Carmen Baird, Dominique Hoffman, Amy Vieira

A new member of the Peng family

Alex Peng (AMF Ops) and his wife Yamile want to introduce their son Isaac born 10/13.



Creative after work

Aimee Vieira, a recent new hire for Paratransit, is enjoying the change of pace from her prior employment. Working for RFTA has given her the time and desire to reawaken her artistic skills and bring out the paint brushes again.

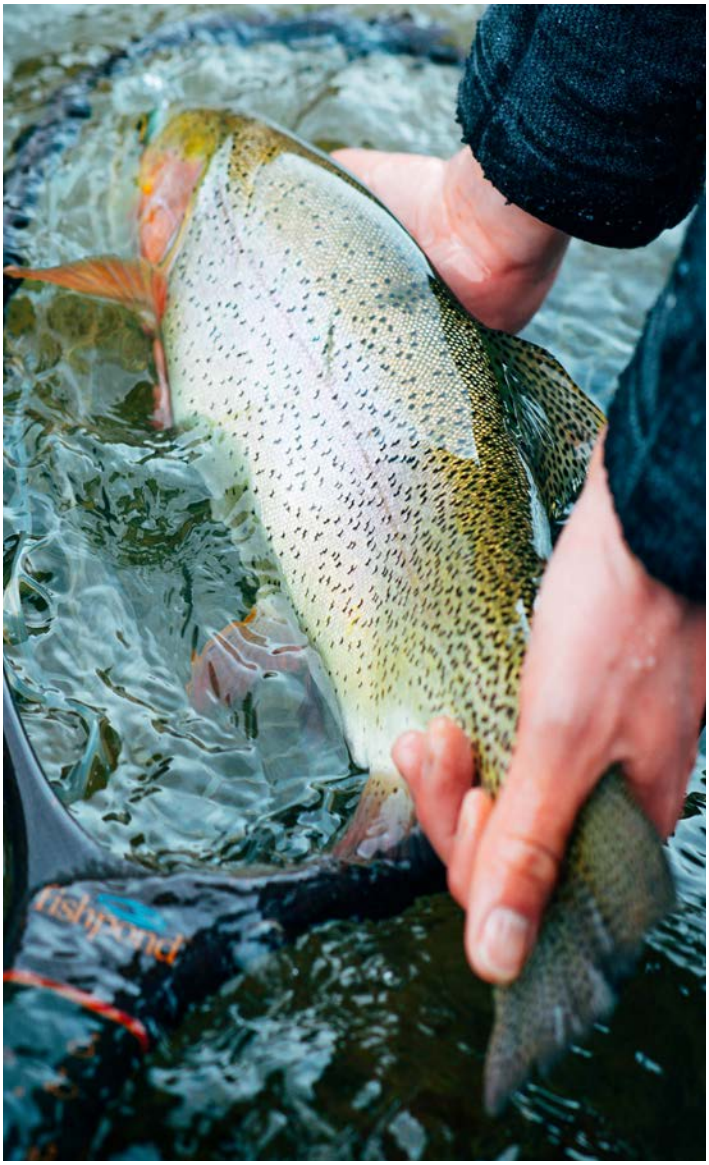
Want to be featured in the RFTA Internal Newsletter, send your information to Terri Rider at HR or RFTA's Marketing Department.

A little extra

In appreciation of everyone's efforts and dedication to keep the buses rolling in 2021, a $50 bonus was included in your first paycheck in January.

Thank You RFTA for your thoughtfulness and generosity.

A new chapter: Joe Barber – Ops Scheduler of 42 years



Joe's dedication to RFTA has over the years been one of the reasons for the success of the organization. Joe first as a driver, then Dispatcher/ Road Supervisor, then as a scheduler.

Joe's numerous contributions to his work were invaluable, and continue to influence the present.

Later as the complexity of RFTA's fueled by its growth created a need for a better solution to creating routes, shifts, and schedules Joe jumped in and learned a new world of scheduling using Trapeze Software. Joe mastered the ability to use Trapeze to create the methods RFTA currently uses to create our new routes, new drivers' work, and schedules.

His scheduling work has created the template for the future of RFTA. Joe's hard work and dedication to RFTA have proven to be invaluable to RFTA now and in the future. Joe is also feared by the fish of the Roaring Fork Valley.

Bonnie McLean - HR & RFTA Benefits

It is time for me to sign off from RFTA. I have moved to Fountain Hills, AZ. We sold our house in Aspen Glen. The plan was to rent in the Valley but that did not work out. So, we decided to move to Fountain Hills (temporarily) while we sort things out. We hope to return to Roaring Fork Valley in the spring. I will be around during January, in case you need assistance. I have really loved getting to know you all, especially:
Dan Blankenship – always responds promptly and kindly – when I feel a need to send him emails
Linda Forgacs – she will always be my friend
John Hocker – historian…taught me so much about RFTA
Paul Hamilton – respected my comments,
Will Guillermo – organized great get together lunches at the AMF
Juan Martinez & wife, Irma– always a great friend
Alice Trotto – just loved her– could answer so many questions
Linda Kasden – works very hard, loved hiking with her. Another great friend.
Kim Slack - Works very hard & we have become friends

Bonnie McLean

Winter Pillars Amongst Us - RFTA's monthly employee spotlight

October 2021

Cristian Gallegos (Vehicle Maintenance – AMF)

He is always willing to help translate and is now doing CDL Training. Cristian started with RFTA in 2015 as a hostler. Cristian hosteled for three years until he was asked if he would like to be a bus tech, he took RFTA up on the offer and partnered with RFTA to go to Wyotech. Cristian graduated from Wyotech in 2018 and started as a service tech. Cristian was a service tech for a year and was promoted to Lead Mechanic and has been doing an excellent job as a Lead. Cristian also has a brother Raul Gallegos that works for RFTA as a driver. Cristian's favorite sport is soccer at which he excelled when he was in school and probably could have gone pro. Cristian's future plans are starting a family in the valley and staying at RFTA for his career. Cristian's positive energy and professionalism sets a very good example for his work associates. I always look forward to working with Cristian.

Barb Rey (Traveler/ParaTransit) Barb has jumped in since Covid hit when we began delivering lunches to people for Garfield County, so the drivers could focus on driving especially while we have been short-handed. She continues to step in to deliver lunches when the driver's schedule is tight. Barb has been a big asset for me since I transferred to Paratransit Service. She has helped me in learning the RouteMatch system, and how to get what I need to get accomplished in a new department. She has continued to be a huge help especially the last 6 weeks while I was the only supervisor working 5 days a week and trying to hire and training new drivers while moving into taking on the responsibility of the Senior Van. Barb has held down the fort when I have left the office and she has done a great job. Thank you, Barb!
From Dawn: I think it is great that Susan has nominated Barb. Since I have been working with everyone in Paratransit, I have found both Susan and Barb to be professional, kind, helpful, and dedicated to RFTA and the communities we serve.

Abbey Pascoe (Facilities)

Abbey has been tasked with everything from taking on the system administrator role for the facilities and trails EAM use, to overseeing all of the documentation used to manage every aspect of the RFTA Railroad Corridor. She has reorganized how both arms of this department operate. Stayed on top of every single aspect of her role and done it all with a smile and a sarcastic, fun sense of humor. This department would be lost without her to keep us all on our toes. There is nothing that gets handed to Abbey that she cannot manage

November 2021

Terri Rider (HR)

Terri has been with RFTA for 4 1/2 years, in the capacity of HR Administrative Assistant. She is an important team member of the Human Resources Department. Terri enjoys helping and working with employees hands on as much as possible. She keeps employees happy with chocolates, winter jackets and many other RFTA gifts. She is a true ambassador. Terri sets a high standard for prompt and professional responsiveness. She is an excellent resource and knows much about all the specialties of HR: daily employee Covid forms and quarantine, RFTA Strong, Open Enrollment and Benefits, Workers Compensation, and new hire Orientation. Terri has compassion, courage, organizational skills, patience, and resilience. Terri is kind and has a great personality. I enjoy working with her and feel she is on top of making sure she does what she can for all RFTA employees. I love the way she takes the time to listen and if she is unable to answer your questions, she will find out and get back to you. Terri is a vital employee here at RFTA! Without her hard work and diligence, so much of what we do would not be possible. She has a very kind heart and never fails to look out for the employees' best interest.

Rebecca Borges (Ops)

Rebecca has been with RFTA for one year, in the capacity of Administrative Assistant.
Ian, her department manager, wants to recognize Rebecca for her dedicated efforts. Prior to being hired for this position, the Operations Admin Assistant position didn't exist. Over the last year she has been willing to jump in and help out where ever her assistance was needed while we sorted out the duties that she should be in charge of. She has been instrumental in creating a position that is able to help manage the work load that is part of the Operations department.
Rebecca has taken on a laundry list of responsibilities within the Operations department and has taken them on in stride. She has streamlined and optimized a number of processes that has led to a large increase in the efficiency of the department overall. Her personality and passion has been a breath of fresh air within the Operations department and she brings this energy to everything she does. Recently she led a project to decorate a bus for a Trunk or Treat event in Carbondale, her efforts in this endeavor were exceptional and RFTA was the star of the show.

Nominate the next pillar!

Any employee can nominate an employee by completing the nomination form, BUT, the nomination must be approved by the nominee's department head to ensure the employee is in good standing in their department.

Nomination form available on RFTA's HUB

December 2021

Matt Mullally (IT)

Matt has been with RFTA for six years, in the capacity of IT – Senior Software Engineer.

Craig Dubin wants to recognize Matt for his dedicated efforts.

Matt's job by definition is to support departments and other colleagues. However, there has been multiple projects and times over the last year where Matt has stepped up and gone above and beyond expected effort to improve a process or experience for coworkers. Over the last year, Matt has creatively solved several key problems we have at RFTA that help bridge the gap for some of our technical systems. Specifically, Matt developed a web application that allows users to add context or create a bridge between systems, thereby eliminating the need for unwieldy spreadsheets. The data is secure in a database. This application is extensible, meaning that he can add other modules, extending the value and use to RFTA as we go. The end result is that we now have a means to enhance many of the software programs we've purchased to add custom features with minimal cost or effort. I believe that much of what I'm talking about is within the scope of a software engineer/developer's job. What's commendable are his listening skills and temperament to try to understand a problem, and to use his creativity to develop elegant solutions. Simple is difficult to do with technical systems. Usually, the more simple it is for the user, the more complex it is on the programming side. It's clear from the ease of use of his end products that he spends a lot of time and attention to detail to make it easy for the user. Matt epitomizes what I think every organization should look for in their workforce. Highly intelligent, accountable, creative thinker, problem solver and happy to help!

Hadden Walker (Ops - AMF)

Hadden has been with RFTA for six years, in the capacity of a CDL Bus Operator. Jeff Aldrich, his department manager, wants to recognize Hadden for his dedicated efforts. Hadden started with RFTA as a seasonal CDL operator in the spring of 2015. By the end of that summer season when he was seeking promotion to full time he wrote a letter stating; "First, let's say thank you to Jeff for giving me this opportunity, I seriously needed a new career direction. I just didn't imagine that I'd be having so much damn fun! When I put the bus in gear and released the brake, my brain goes to a higher level driven by responsibility and performance and my goal is the perfect run and perfect shift. I'm pretty sure I remember every mistake I've made and just as sure I won't make that one again. That's my goal anyway. RFTA pays you for good judgment.

My family and friends would tell you it's been a long time since they have seen me this satisfied and happy at work and I want to ride this horse for a long time. You know those people who suddenly acquire a ridiculous amount of cash and say they aren't going to quit their job? Well, for the first time in my life I think I have one of those jobs." Hadden is a great guy, a great leader, and he exemplifies the most important role in our organization as a bus operator. He always avails himself for training, mentoring and imparting his extensive knowledge to our old and new operators alike. He's liked and respected by passengers, co-workers and the community. Probably all because of his love for life and love for the job… He was awarded Driver of the year in 2018 and continues to be a "PILLAR" we should all strive to emulate.

$800 IN VACCINE BONUSES

VACCINE BONUS BREAKDOWN

DETALLES DE LOS BONOS DE VACUNAS

Get bonuses when you get vaccinated, keep yourself safe as well as your co-workers, family, friends and the public.

Obtenga bonificaciones cuando se vacune, manténgase seguro, así como a sus compañeros de trabajo, familiares, amigos y el público.

FLU VACCINE (Until Feb. 15th)	**$50**
COMPLETE COVID-19 VACCINE (2 Doses)	**$500**
COVID -19 BOOSTER	**$250**
TOTAL IN BONUSES	**$800**

Email a picture of your vaccine/booster cards and Flu Shot date to HR@rfta.com

Envíe por correo electrónico una foto de sus tarjetas de vacuna/refuerzo y la fecha de la vacuna contra la influenza a HR@rfta.com

AN UPDATE ON RFTA'S CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Building for Generations

September
Work continued through the month of September with good productivity. During the month the contractor continued service utilities within the building footprint, poured footings and stem walls, installed interior wall framing, demolished exterior paving, and graded the exterior and building slab areas. These items progressed nicely and are keeping the project moving at a good rate. The Project is 47% complete at this time.

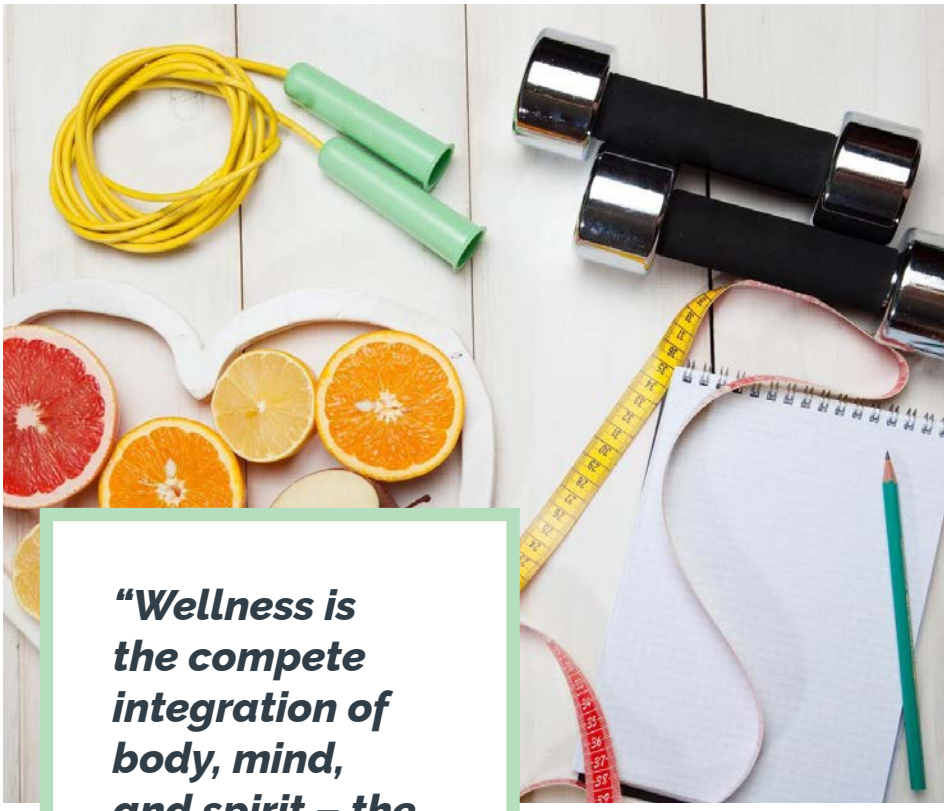
October
Work continued through the month of October with good productivity. During the month the contractor utilities within the building footprint, demolished interior rooms, interior grout column drilling and installation, exterior concrete pavement and the beginning of steel erection. These items progressed nicely and are keeping the project moving at a good rate. The Project is 52% complete at this time

November
Work continued through the month of November with good productivity. During the month the contractor performed steel erection, masonry anchors, interior grout columns, interior drywall, flooring, ceiling, painting, interior electrical and mechanical, fire suppression, and exterior concrete paving these items progressed nicely and are keeping the project moving at a good rate. The Project is 58% complete at this time.

The GMF Phase 2 Expansion project is well underway.
MW Golden is the current contractor performing the expansion of the GMF. The structural steel can be seen on the exterior of the building and a new maintenance bay has been constructed. The new -old dispatch area has been remodeled with new flooring, ceiling and paint. An elevator will be installed which will access the new 2nd story of the maintenance area, where new bathrooms, a break room and offices will be located. Also coming soon are a new parts inventory room, tire storage and expanded toolbox storage space.

Construction of Phase 2 at the GMF is scheduled to be completed in spring of 2022.

RFTA has a new contractor for the next phases of expansion at the GMF. Saunders Construction was successful in getting the contracted work from RFTA and will start in the early spring of 2022.
The next phases of the GMF expansion will be centered at the MOC (GWS Municipal Operations Center) location recently purchased by RFTA, construction of an indoor bus storage garage, dispatch area, driver breakroom and restrooms, operations offices and re-organized employee parking.



The greatest wealth is health

Welcome to the new year of 2022. Several of you might want to accomplish New Year resolutions. How about putting your health and wellbeing FIRST and earn cash bonuses along the way?

There are 3 easy steps on participating in our RFTA Strong wellness program.

"Wellness is the compete integration of body, mind, and spirit – the realization that everything we do, think, feel, and believe has an effect on our state of well-being."
-Greg Anderson

Step 1: Complete Wellness Activities each month
Step 2: Earn points by completing a variety of activities
Step 3: Qualify for a monthly $150 Cash Prize Drawing

There are many resources as well which include exercise recommendations, healthy recipes as well as Travitor courses.

RFTA Strong is quick and easy to sign up at this website:
Login: **(wellnessportal.online)**
Thoroughly read the important Notice, Waiver and release
Click the **SIGN UP** button and complete the profile form.
Enter the Program Code: **rftawellness**

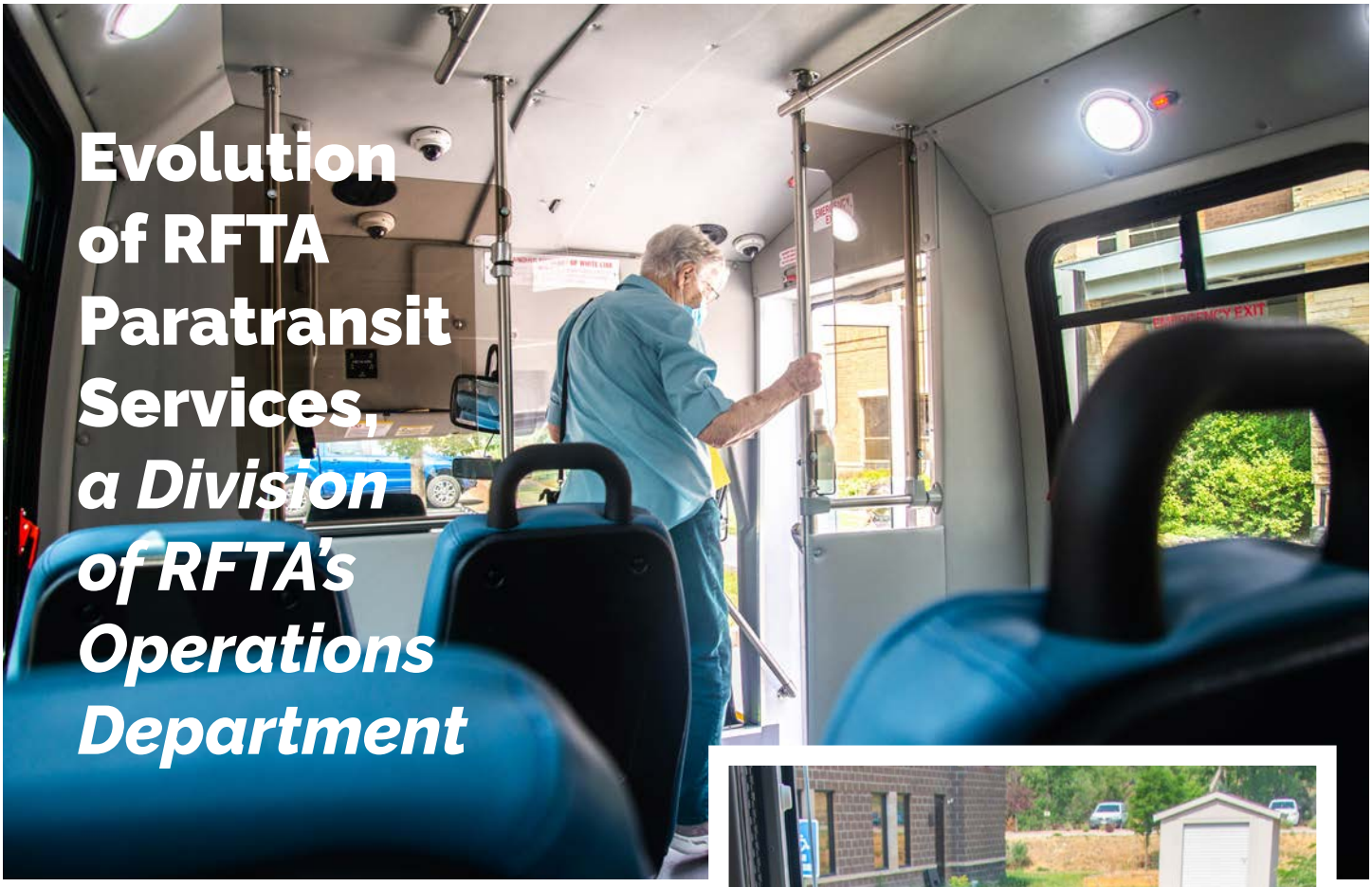
RFTA Strong Winners who earned $150 bonus

RFTA STRONG
DRIVING GOOD HEAL

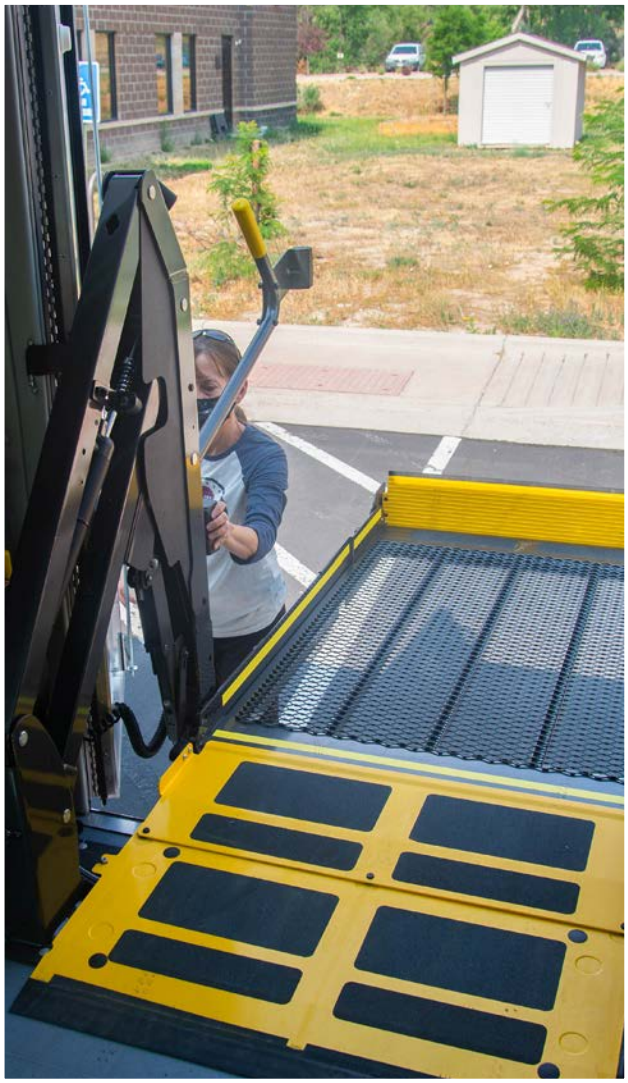
October Challenge:
Rebecca McArdle – Ops - Winner of the challenge
Megan Faichney – Finance – as the randomly selected participant

November:
Mindful Minute – Slow down to breathe.
Alice Trotto – Ops - Winner of the challenge
Katy Tischler – Paratransit – as the randomly selected participant

December:
No Gain Campaign
Nancy Hostetler – Safety – Winner of the challenge
Chaquita Walker – Ops – as the randomly selected participant



Evolution of RFTA Paratransit Services, *a Division of RFTA's Operations Department*



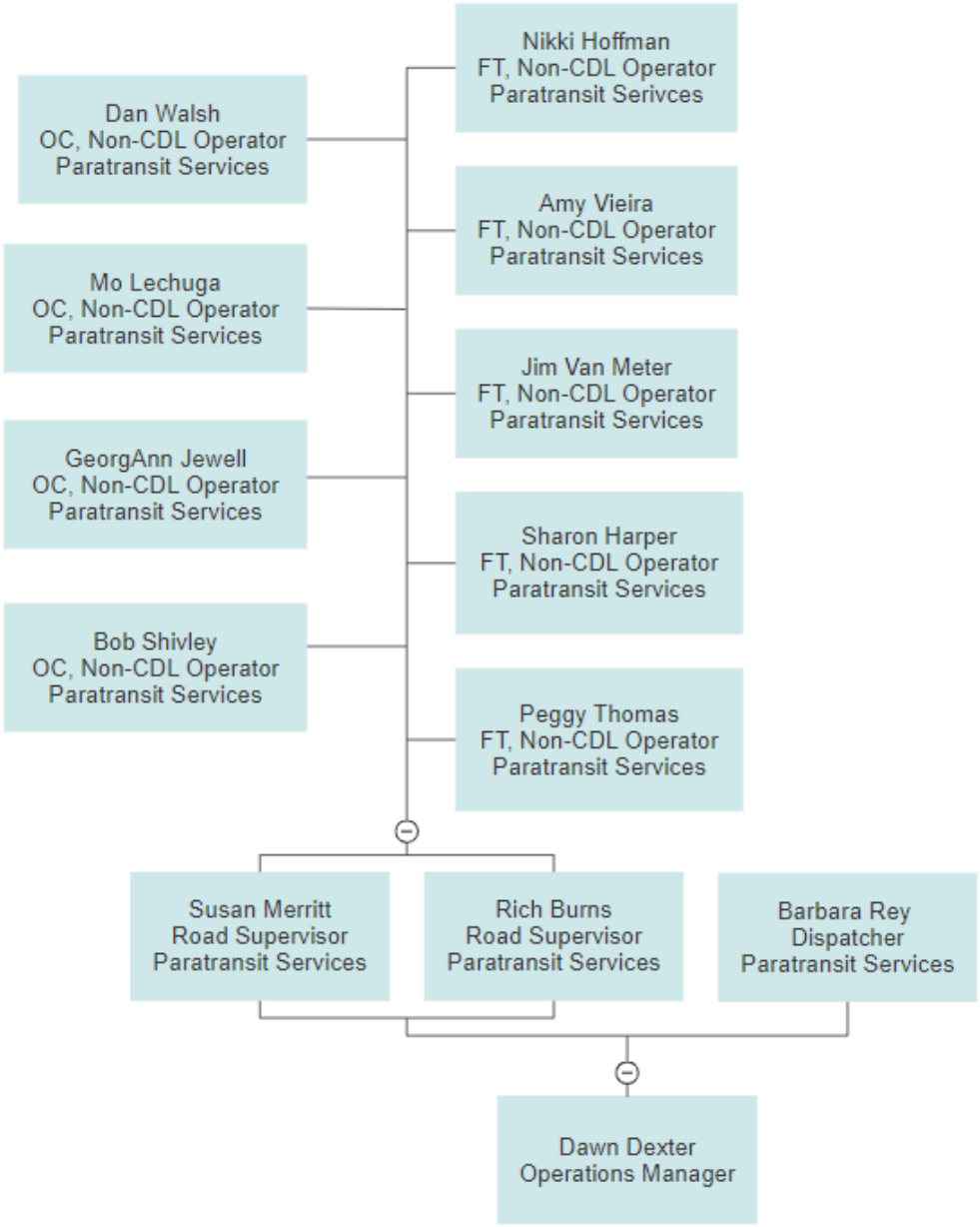
Those of you who have worked at RFTA for a long time, have probably heard of a service called The Traveler which has served the residents of Garfield County for many years in many different iterations, initially as a service for seniors. Today, The Traveler serves anyone who has a qualifying disability in its service area in Garfield County and is managed by RFTA's Paratransit Services team who are a division of the Operations Department.

In 2021, RFTA's Paratransit Services team also began managing the Senior Van which serves people over the age of 60 in the Aspen area, often providing trips to and from Aspen's Senior Center.

RFTA's Paratransit Services team also makes sure that RFTA meets or exceeds all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in regards to transportation. This means providing transportation to anyone with a qualifying disability within ¾ of a mile of any fixed route service (not commuter or regional services). Currently, this means providing ADA Complementary Paratransit service to passengers in Aspen, Carbondale, and Glenwood Springs during the same hours as fixed route services in those towns.

Evolution of RFTA Paratransit Services, a Division of RFTA's Operations Department cont.

The Paratransit Services team is currently made up of one Paratransit Dispatcher, Barbary Rey, two Paratransit Road Supervisors, Susan Merritt and Rich Burns, five full-time non-CDL, PASS trained drivers, and four part-time, on-call, non-CDL, PASS trained drivers. Dawn Dexter is the Operations Manager primarily tasked with leading this team.
Below is a chart showing the current organization of the Paratransit Services division of Operations.



The new role of the HR department is basically the school nurse.
For all other inquiries, send email to HR@rfta.com
Someone will respond at some point in time.

RFTA Opts for Vaccine Booster Incentive Bonus Instead of On-Site Rapid Antigen Testing Program

You may or may not know that for several months RFTA was planning to initiate a once-per-week on-site COVID-19 Rapid Antigen testing program at the AMF and GMF. Originally, the testing program was primarily intended for unvaccinated employees (of which there are approximately 90), as well as employees with symptoms or employees who had possibly been exposed to someone with COVID. With the emergence of the Omicron variant, though, we soon learned that even people who had previously contracted COVID (and who had also been vaccinated and boosted) could still be infected. So, our thinking changed, and we came to the conclusion that in order to be effective, the on-site testing program would need to be expanded to cover all RFTA employees (of which there are approximately 380).

However, the further we got into planning for the testing program, the more we realized that the logistics of testing approximately 380 employees once per week at two different facilities would be very challenging. In addition, it appears that Rapid Antigen Testing could be hit or miss, depending upon which stage in the infection process employees were in when tested. So, we began to realize that a single test per week might not reliably identify COVID-positive employees in time to prevent them from infecting others. For this reason, as well as the disruption the testing program might cause during an already stressful winter season, plus the administrative burden and the expense involved, it was decided not to move forward with the on-site testing program. As an alternative, the Federal government is providing four free at-home test kits for people who order them **(COVIDtests.gov - Free at-home COVID-19 tests),** and numerous free COVID-19 testing sites are available in the region **(COVID-19 testing – Public Health (garfield-county.com).**

So far, the symptoms of Omicron are thought to be less severe for people who have been vaccinated or boosted within the past six months. That is why we decided that a better way to help protect RFTA employees from more severe symptoms of COVID would be to continue encouraging everyone to get vaccinated and/or boosted. To this end, RFTA is continuing to offer a $500 incentive bonus for the initial vaccinations (for those who have not already received them), and we are also offering a $250 booster incentive bonus to RFTA employees that provide documentation to the Human Resources Department that they have received their booster shots.

On January 5, 2022, RFTA had a high of 36 employees out of work for COVID-related reasons and, currently, there are approximately 10 people out. I hope that the post-holiday Omicron spike is receding and that our numbers will continue to remain low from this point forward. However, as we are learning with COVID-19 and its associated variants, there are no guarantees, so please continue to do your best to protect yourselves by following all of the protocols we have put in place at RFTA.

I greatly appreciate everyone's commitment to staying healthy and willingness to continue working during the pandemic. Your dedication is enabling RFTA to deliver essential regional transit services upon which so many rely.

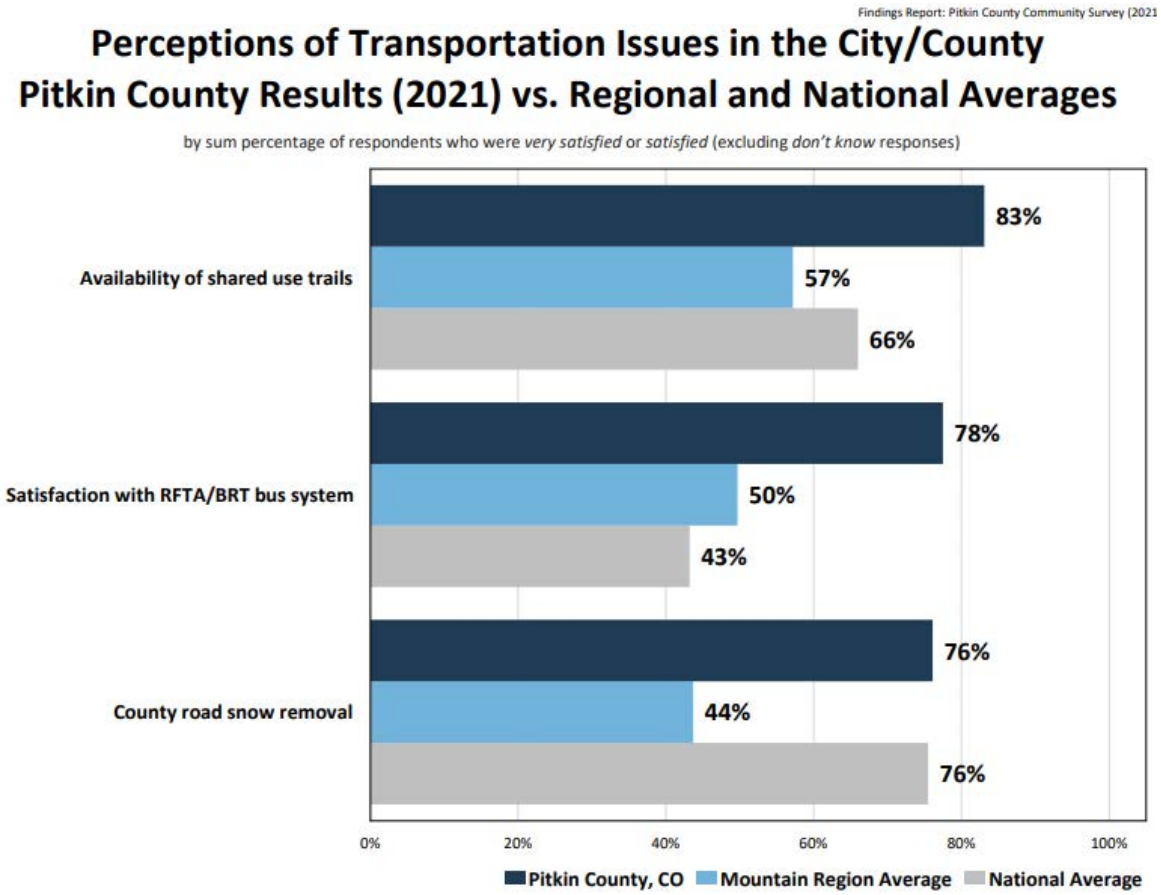
Thank you!

Dan

New RFTA Property and BRT Layover

RFTA has recently acquired the former CME property at 505 27th Street in Glenwood Springs. Long term, this property will be used as a park and ride as well the base for construction for the 27th street underpass. For the immediate future, this space will be used as a layover space and breakroom for BRT drivers taking their break in and around 27th street station. To access this new space from 27th street, see the map below. Once on the property, buses should be parked behind the building. There is a code lock on the door to the building.

RFTA rates very well among Pitkin County residents, compared to the Mountain and National averages



ETC Institute administered a community survey to residents of Pitkin County, Colorado.

The purpose of the survey was to assess resident satisfaction with County services and to help the County ensure that its priorities continue to match the needs and desires of its residents.

A life celebrated

Chris Anderson

https://www.postindependent.com/news/obituaries/obituary-christopher-chris-anderson/

Many of you may have already learned the sad news about the unexpected passing on 10/09, of our friend and co-worker Chris Anderson, at his home. A number of RFTA employees were informed of Chris' death by his son, David.

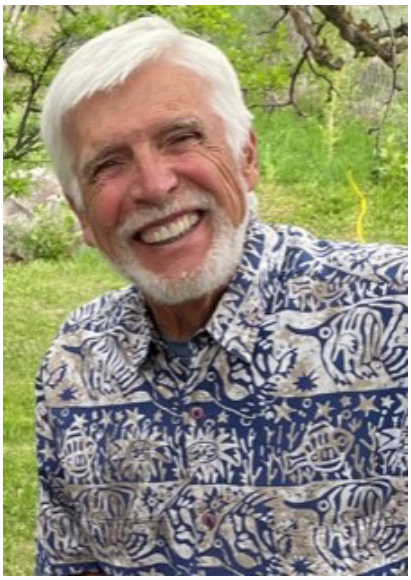
I was able to speak with David and, understandably, the family is in a state of shock and quite grief-stricken by the loss of Chris. I extended RFTA's heartfelt condolences and let David know that we stand ready to assist Chris' family and him in any way that we can as they find their way forward.

In the meantime, I know that everyone that knew Chris, and experienced his kind and gentle spirit, will greatly miss him. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers, and let's honor his memory by being as kind to each other as he was to us.

Dan Blankenship
Chief Executive Officer

Chris Anderson's Celebration of Life was held November 20th at Glenwood Springs Recreation Department. His cause of death was Acute Bronchial Pneumonia.

Howard Stapleton



It is with a heavy heart that I share the sad news that Howard Stapleton passed away.

According to his wife, Margo, Howard was doing some stretching before working out and suffered a ruptured aorta. Although Margo was able to transport him to the hospital, the doctors were unable to save him.

Howard began working at RFTA as a seasonal Bus Operator in November 2015 and became a part-time Bus Operator in April of 2016. As a part-timer, who could pick his shifts, it was not uncommon for Howard to help RFTA out by working 20 – 50 hours every pay period. Howard had an excellent driving record and was one of the best ambassadors with the public that RFTA has ever employed. According to Margo, Howard loved working at RFTA, and that explains why he always had a smile and an encouraging word for everyone he encountered.

In addition to being one of the fittest persons most of us have ever known, Howard was a man of many professions and talents. He served in the U.S. Airforce as an air traffic controller, he held a Private Pilot/Commercial Rating, he worked for many years as a civil engineer draftsman, served on the RE-2 School Board, built a cabin on his property, and kept busy with numerous chores around his rural country home. Truly, Howard served as a role model and inspiration for many of us, and there are no words for us to express our sense of loss.

Howard is survived by his wife, Margo, daughter Tracey, and sons Stuart and Scott. Please keep Howard's family and friends in your thoughts and prayers. A memorial service will be held several months in the future, and we will provide more information when it becomes available.