RFTA'S INTERNAL NEWSLETTER SPRING 2023

BEHIND THE WHEEL

RFTA Internal Customer Service

Not sure how to reach HR or the housing coordinator or the scheduling team and have a question or suggestion?

You can call our new RFTA Internal Customer Service line at 970-384-4955.

This line is staffed by Vicki Rogers, a former driver and long-time RFTA employee who now works in Customer Service and is the keeper of RFTA's internal phone directory.

She is usually at her desk from 8:30 am to 11 am and from 1 pm to 6 pm, Monday through Friday. When she is not at her desk or on another line, her voicemail will pick up.

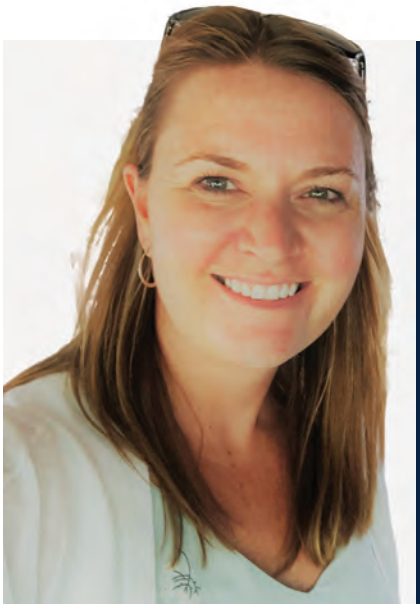
Please leave a message for her to return your call.

END OF SEASON PARTY

Let's come together, to celebrate the ability to come together and appreciate the success of another winter season soon coming to completion. Enjoy the evening with tasty food, lively entertainment, and the comradery of co-workers. Each employee may invite one adult guest. RSVP by March 10th on the HUB at hub.rfta.com.

SCAN TO RSVP

PROMOTIONS



TAMMY SOMMERFELD

After an internal recruitment process, I am pleased to announce Tammy Sommerfeld has accepted the position of RFTA's Procurement Director. Her background and proven success with RFTA give her an excellent understanding of the position, along with years of experience she has gained working here.

Tammy started her career with RFTA in 2013 as a Procurement Specialist I and progressed over the years becoming a Procurement Specialist II, Interim Procurement Manager, and Procurement Manager. Throughout her career, Tammy has continued to learn, adapt, and evolve as she leads her team and builds working relationships across all areas of the organization.

Tammy is a graduate of the American Public Transportation Association's Emerging Leaders program, RFTA Leadership Academy, and holds a Bachelor's Degree from the Michigan State University in Supply Chain Management.

Tammy is focused on leading the Procurement Department, supporting the organization in delivering transit service to our region and meeting our communities' transportation needs, and trying to have fun along the way.

Please join me in congratulating Tammy on a well-deserved promotion and success in her new role as Procurement Director.

Michael Yang, C.P.A.
Chief Financial & Administrative Officer (CFAO)

PEGGY THOMAS

Please join me in welcoming Peggy Thomas as our newest Paratransit Supervisor. Peggy has been a part of the Paratransit Team for 11 years, starting out as a part-time driver of the Traveler service and becoming full-time after a few years. Peggy's steady problem solving skills, service oriented teamwork abilities, and proven dedication to our paratransit passengers and our community made her the stand out candidate for this position in a field of excellent candidates.

Congratulations, Peggy, on a well-deserved promotion!

Dawn Dexter
Operations Manager

Promoted to Road Supervisor

After a lengthy selection process, we are glad to announce the selection of Trevor Aldridge, Julian Davis and Lori Hubit as our new Road Supervisors.

Trevor, Julian and Lori bring a variety of unique experience from various backgrounds along with their calm, easygoing and positive attitudes that will not only allow them to succeed in their new roles as Road Supervisors but also be an invaluable addition to our Road Supervisor Team.

Congratulations Trevor, Julian and Lori on a well-deserved promotion.

TREVOR ALDRIDGE

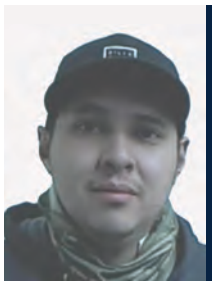
JULIAN DAVIS

LORI HUBIT

More Promotions

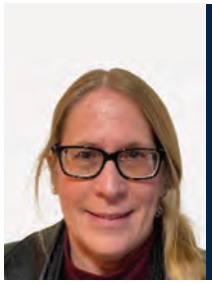
KRISTA BRANSTETTER

Accepted the role of Safety and Training Coordinator.



OSCAR DIAZ

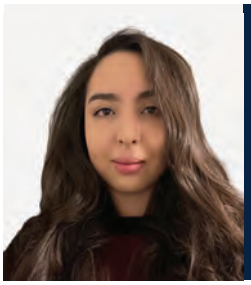
Congratulations Oscar Diaz for being promoted to Transit Mechanic in January.



MARY WOOD

Promoted to Accounting Tech II.

N E W H I R E S



YAZMIN CARLSON

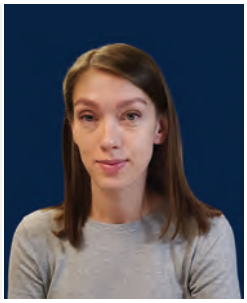
Creative Communications Associate

Yazmin grew up in the valley for the first half of her life and the other half in Mexico. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Graphic Design & Animation. Her hobbies include running, skiing, reading, solving puzzles and playing video games. She has a 9 year old dog named Capi (short for Capitán), he is a poodle mix/ schnauzer.

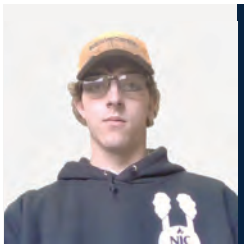
VIKTORIA VANDENYUK

Accounting Manager

Viktoria moved to the valley 13 years ago from Siberia. She tried several different paths before finally choosing accounting as a career. She currently lives mid-valley with her husband and two kids. Her hobbies include biking and hiking beautiful Colorado mountains in the summer, and cross-country skiing in the winter. Viktoria also loves to travel and learn new things. She is happy to join RFTA family and the Finance department.



C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S



TRENT SMITH

Vehicle Maintenance

Congratulations Trent Smith for passing six ASE Certifications in January:

Drive Train, Suspension & Steering, HVAC, Compressed Natural Gas, Diesel Engines, Electrical/ Electronic Systems.

NEWLY JOINED DRIVERS & REHIRES

Dwight Armstrong
Artaius Bright
Marlon Hall-Bryan
Linda Lawal
Cole Maxson
Wendy Medina
Calvin Miyazaki
Laura Reyes (Porras)
James Saccicandro
Stella Skiles
Da Sum
Tanya Trimm
Tajanne Wilson

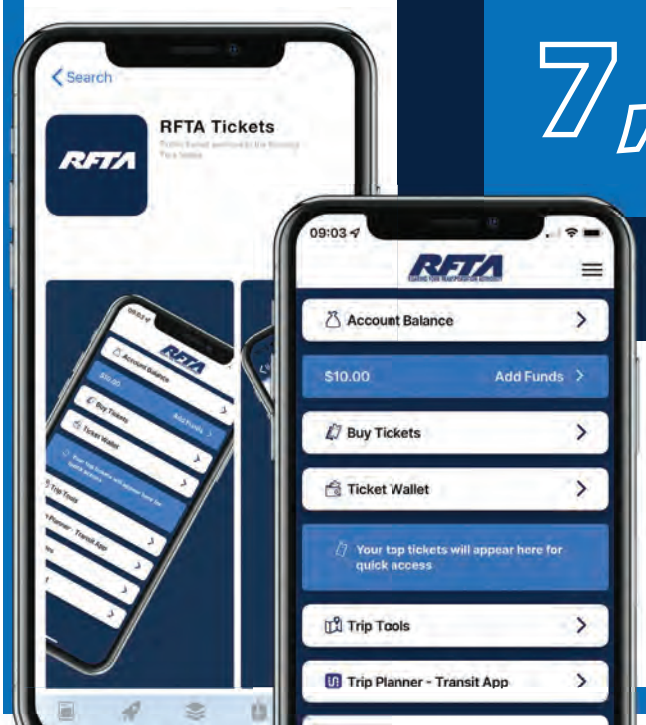
DEPARTMENT CHANGES

Chris McArdle transferred from Operations to Vehicle Maintenance in January.

RFTA MOBILE TICKETS APP

Current Downloads

7,551



BEHIND THE WHEEL

RFTA
ROARING FORK TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

RFTA BOARD

Pitkin County
Greg Poschman / Francie Jacober

Town of Basalt
Bill Kane / David Knight

City of Aspen
Torre / Ward Hauenstein

Town of Carbondale
Ben Bohmfalk / Colin Laird

Eagle County
Jeanne McQueeney /
Kathy Chandler-Henry

City of Glenwood Springs
Jonathan Godes / Shelley Kaup

Town of New Castle
Art Riddile / Brandy Copeland

Town of Snowmass Village
Alyssa Shenk / Bill Madsen

RFTA CEO
Dan Blankenship

RFTA COO
Kurt Ravenschlag

RFTA CFAO
Michael Yang

RFTA Human Resources & Communications

Linda Forgacs
Human Resources Director | 970-384-4952

Maria Vazquez
HR & Risk Mgmt. Manager | 970-384-4950

Megan Faichney
Benefits Manager | 970-384-4878

Kipling Gomez
HR Generalist | 970-384-4854

Debbie Alcorta
Housing Coordinator | 970-384-4875

Terri Rider
Business Support Specialist III | 970-384-4889

Jamie Tatsuno
Communications Manager | 970-384-4864

Joni Christenson
Communications Specialist | 970-384-4871

Yazmin Carlson
Communications Associate | 970-989-1184

RFTASTRONG

DRIVING GOOD HEALTH

RFTA Wellness Program

RFTA has a wellness program that is available on the HUB. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to have accessible tools to make a difference in your daily routines and eventually make better health related choices in your life. RFTAStrong has two different programs you may participate. One is an on-going self-challenge, such as doing a family activity, eating at least five meals at home, reading a book …

The other is a companywide wellness challenge. January was Beat the Food Junkie. February was the 21-day challenge. This challenge included small items that can result in a big difference; such as create a budget, review your retirement contributions, stretch for minimum 10 minutes, spend time in nature… Either way you choose to participate, or want to sign up for both programs, there are cash bonuses offered for those who best succeed in the monthly and individual. In addition, there is one monthly random drawing for those who choose to participate but not compete.

PILLARS AMONGST US

JANUARY PILLARS 2023

CONGRATULATIONS

Loyda Vazquez (Operations – Dispatch)

Loyda has been with RFTA since October 2015, working her way up from a CDL Bus Operator to a Dispatcher. Shannon, Rick and Scott, her colleagues, want to recognize Loyda for her dedicated efforts.

Loyda has been an inspiring co-worker since she became a supervisor in 2017, her work ethic has us all trying to keep up. Her 'lead by example' is a gift we receive daily in dispatch. Loyda is quick to resolve pop-up issues that we deal with 24-7. She has the best happy & sweet attitude through it all. Loyda is grace under pressure when things are at their worst. She commands a healthy and deserved respect from the operators as well as us working alongside her. Through the bridge project and through the staffing nightmares of covid the past two years and counting, she regularly re-invents the wheel with available driver personnel to unfilled shifts to provide as much RFTA service to the public as possible.

Every morning Loyda is on her cell phone making special deals/plans with individual drivers, getting them to do extra work to save service from being canceled. This is above and beyond. It's amazing how much she can persuade operators to dig a little deeper and help out. When her ideas and schemes get fleshed out, it fixes dire staffing issues in a herculean way. She has quietly been repeating this daily for years. We often joke how little recognition this gets, but I'm making a pitch now for Loyda to get some 'pillar amongst us' love.

If most of us at dispatch are ordinary, then she stands beyond us. People listen to her; she commands and gets compliance where directed. She gets results to an impressive degree. Loyda doesn't get to ring the bell on the RFTA train, but she keeps RFTA running smoother and on the tracks. We nickname her The Rainmaker because what she does reaps exponential benefits for RFTA's finished product on the road. This cannot be overstated, she ROCKS.

Warren Smith (GMF – Vehicle Maintenance)

Warren has been with RFTA since August 2009, now in the capacity of a Lead Mechanic. Stewart Clark his manager wants to recognize Warren for his dedicated efforts.

Warren is an excellent example of civility and empathy both at and away from work. He is one of those special Individuals we trust with our most valued treasures. This year Warren watched houses and pets for Vehicle Maintenance employees so they could take much needed vacations. He does this without recognition or compensation.

We should all be more like Warren.

FEBRUARY PILLARS 2023

Sandra Guzman (Operations)

Sandra has been with RFTA since December 2018, in the capacity of a CDL Bus Operator. Alice Trotto her colleague - Dispatcher, wants to recognize Sandra for her dedicated efforts.

She is always friendly to everyone and extra willing to help new drivers. With Sandra's always smiling face and willingness to help I believe she makes everyone's day just a little better. Sandra is always willing to jump in to help on anything Dispatch asks her to do no matter if it is a City Run or a 12 hour shift as a show up.

Chris Skof (AMF – Vehicle Maintenance)

Chris has been with RFTA since September 2012, now in the capacity of a Lead Mechanic. Stewart Clark his manager wants to recognize Chris for his dedicated efforts.

In Vehicle Maintenance our Leadmen set the tone for a shift. If the Leadman has a great attitude, works hard and is kind to co-workers, then the employees of the shift do the same. Chris exemplifies all of the qualities of a good leader. We affectionately refer to Chris as the "Energizer Bunny" because he keeps on going.

Thank you, Chris for all you do.

CONGRATULATIONS

MARCH PILLARS 2023

CONGRATULATIONS

Jorge Izquierdo (Operations)

Jorge has been with RFTA since October 2020, in the capacity of a CDL Bus Operator. Jerry Herring, one of the Road Supervisors, wants to recognize Jorge for his dedicated efforts.

Jorge is one of RFTA's unsung heroes of driving. He always has a great attitude and does an excellent job of driving safely as well as takes great care and concern for his passengers. He is an inspiration to other drivers and supervisors with his professional attitude and is always willing to go above and beyond to help when needed.

Trent Smith (AMF – Vehicle Maintenance)

Trent has been with RFTA since December 2018, in the capacity of Lead Mechanic. Stewart Clark his manager wants to recognize Trent for his dedicated efforts.

Trent installed the driver barrier electro-magnets in every New Flyer Brick and assisted with the barrier magnet design. After the units were in service the magnets began to release slowly causing passenger exiting issues. Trent worked to find a solution, then upgraded every new flyer bus with higher voltage relays and updated wiring. He worked tirelessly to complete the task so RFTA Operations would have minimal disruptions.

Cesar Farias (Facilities)

Cesar has been with RFTA since March 2018, in the capacity Facilities Tech II. Dustin Goodman, his manager, wants to recognize Cesar for his dedicated efforts.

I would like to recognize Cesar for his ability to read a bad situation and for keeping our patrons and properties safe. During one of Cesar's afternoon PM inspections, he noticed an intoxicated person harassing one or our patrons. Cesar kindly asked the intoxicated person to stop what they were doing and to leave the property, unfortunately Cesar was met with threats of violence. Cesar calmly called the police and then decided it was best to sit with the patron being harassed until the police could show up and take control. This was a tricky situation and I think Cesar did a great job keeping our patron safe and for not letting the situation escalate.

X Games

The Winter X-Games mark the single busiest weekend for RFTA each year. For the first time in three years there were no restrictions placed on vaccination status, capacity, or mask usage, and live concerts returned. These combined factors led to ridership demands that would normally far exceed what RFTA would be capable of transporting on a regular day. Friday, Saturday and Sunday required all available operations staff to be able to meet the demands of the event. Members of other departments and administrative staff, who still maintain their CDLs, stepped in to help during the busiest times as well. In the weeks leading up to X-Games the Vehicle Maintenance team made a tremendous effort in their repair work to ensure that as many buses would be available as possible for this event.

Weather in the Upper Valley on Saturday evening had a major impact on the Operation of RFTA and X-Games service causing significant delays and service interruptions. Multiple accidents, not involving RFTA, closed Down-valley Highway 82 for close to an hour which slowed egress from X-games to Brush Creek Park and Ride/Snowmass Village. This closure on Saturday evening most severely impacted passengers travelling down-valley from the Buttermilk Highway stop where wait times for a bus was over one hour at times. Despite these conditions and large crowds, RFTA was able to ultimately get everyone to their destination safely. This weekend was a tremendous undertaking and the fact that it was done without major incident or accident is a testament to all involved.

Below is a letter from **Kody Stewart**, RFTA Road Supervisor, to staff following the X-Games weekend.

A Letter From Kody Stewart

This is an appreciation letter to all drivers and personnel that helped out during X-Games weekend. Our core XEX drivers worked long hours and handled the heavy part of the service. They dealt with adversity and kept smiles on their faces. Our passengers noticed this and it kept us from having ANY altercations this weekend. We had show-ups, drivers finishing their shifts, and off duty employees jump in buses and head to the venue to help out. They solidified the service and honestly were our saving grace. We would have been crushed without them. We also had our regularly scheduled Valleys, BRTs, and Snowmass buses. You all handled the extra workload like true professionals and helped bring people up/get people to their beds at the end of the night. They were grateful for you as well.

Events of this size take a team of individuals to make it work and this past weekend we had a phenomenal one. Friday was a learning experience. We had 3 brand new drivers who had never worked a shift before jump in the seat and do a wonderful job. Saturday was our busiest day with many drivers putting in the long hours to help us keep the venue as clear as possible. A Highway 82 closure Saturday night brought traffic to a halt and we cannot thank you all enough for helping RFTA overcome the hardship and staying professional. Sunday was a breeze after the 2 previous days and we were able to wrap up X-Games on a positive note. We implemented new login procedures for X-Games and you did a wonderful job at sticking to it. That allowed us to get more accurate numbers than ever before. With how tight the platform is at X-Games, we also had NO ACCIDENTS! Well done to all the drivers who came into the venue and maneuvered those tight quarters without incident! Your efficiency and professionalism this weekend was something to behold. You kept smiles on your faces and that kept smiles on the passenger's faces as well. So, to put it simply… to all the X Games drivers and everyone else that helped out, THANK YOU!

If you are encountering a stressful or anxiety filled situation, or other internal emotional conflict/ challenge, consider contacting Triad. Through Triad, RFTA offers eight free sessions per issue, completely confidential. When searching online, counselors throughout the valley list their bio and area of expertise. You may select your preference based on your specific situation. Whether you are wrestling with a small issue, or facing a large tidal wave, Triad is here to help you navigate through the situation.

Benefit Reminders

- **Counseling Benefit:** You, your spouse or significant other, and dependents 26 and under have access to 8 counseling sessions.
- **Website Credentials** for www.triadeap.com
  - **Username:** rfta
  - **Password:** eap
- **Contact Information:** 970-242-9536 or 877-679-1100 if out of the area contactus@triadeap.com; info@triadeap.com
- **Additional Services:** Legal/Financial, Wellness, 24-hour crisis support
- **Case Expiration Date:** 12/31/2023 Any unused sessions will expire on this date.

To continue services, please call Triad EAP at the beginning of your benefit year to establish a new case.

Through the company From You Flowers, RFTA employees may order discounted floral deliveries to family and friends living out of state or out of the local area. This is a great way to remember Grandma's birthday living in Indiana, or congratulate a friend's new baby born in California, or a delivery simply Just Because. The below website automatically applies the 25% discount at time of your purchase.

www.fromyouflowers.com/RFTA call (800) 838-8853 and mention **Code: RFTA** and your 25% discount will be automatically deducted.

Gym Membership

Instead of having the quarterly reimbursements for an annual gym membership, RFTA is considering to have bi-monthly events. This gives employees an opportunity to meet other colleagues they might not necessarily know from other facilities, departments or shifts. It also might encourage you to try a new activity. If you have suggestions of events you would be interested contact

Megan Faichney: mfaichney@rfta.com or 970-384-4878.

February Full Moon Snow Shoe/X-C ski in Carbondale, with Après Ski following.

Memes From Our Social Media

Closing Thought: If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself. (Henry Ford)