Behind The Wheel

RFTA'S INTERNAL NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2023/24

MEMO

ROARING FORK TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

DATE: 12/14/2024
TO: All RFTA Employees
FROM: Jeanne McQueeney, Chair, RFTA Board of Directors
RE: CEO Dan Blankenship's Retirement

RFTA Employees,

After thirty-four years of incredible leadership, our CEO, Dan Blankenship, has decided to retire at the end of 2024.

Dan has been with RFTA and the entity that preceded it since 1989 and has overseen all significant growth in regional transit in our area. Over the course of his leadership, RFTA has experienced exponential expansion, transforming from a modest transit entity into a pivotal Regional Transportation Authority. RFTA was officially formed in 2000 by voters in seven jurisdictions. During his tenure voters have approved three separate sales tax measures to provide funding needed for improved RFTA services and programs. His dedicated leadership has been instrumental in implementing eco-friendly technologies, refining operations, and building successful partnerships across our communities.

Several milestones that were achieved under his leadership include the extension of services to Glenwood Springs and Rifle, frequency enhancements, numerous safety and pedestrian enhancements across our valley, and the creation of the Rio Grande Trail. Moreover, in 2013, Dan led the charge to launch VelociRFTA, the first Rural Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the nation. In 2018, RFTA purchased its first Battery Electric Buses, and voters also approved a 2.65 mill levy property tax to fund RFTA's Destination 2040 Plan.

Under Dan's guidance, RFTA has garnered significant recognition, receiving awards such as the "Best Mass Transit System of North America" by Mass Transit Magazine and the prestigious "Large Transit Agency of the Year" award from the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies. Notably, in 2012, RFTA was honored with the White House Champions of Change Transportation Innovator Award. RFTA also received the Federal Transit Administrator's Outstanding Public Service Award in 2014, along with a SHIFT Sustainability Award.

The RFTA Board of Directors has been diligently working on a CEO succession plan and the position will be posted internally Friday, December 15, 2023 through end of day Thursday, December 21, 2023. Dan's successor is expected to take the helm of RFTA by the Fall of 2024. Dan will remain on staff through the end of 2024 to ensure a smooth transition.

We're immensely grateful for Dan's exceptional leadership and dedication to RFTA, and we are committed to ensuring a seamless transition through 2024 as we move into this new chapter.

Thank you for your continued hard work and dedication during this upcoming transition. As we embark on this journey together, it's crucial to recognize and appreciate every employee for their invaluable contributions to RFTA. The successes achieved under Dan's remarkable leadership, as mentioned earlier, stand as a testament not only to his guidance but also to the collective efforts of everyone—past and present—within this organization.

More details will follow in the coming months as the transition plan progresses. If you have immediate questions please contact your manager or supervisor.

Thank you,
Jeanne McQueeney
Chair, RFTA Board of Directors

Welcome Aboard

Drivers

Priscella Abreu
Herb Bush
Allison Conner
Romeral Curtis
Ryan Cutshall
Ian Dolan
Jarrice Durr
Rolando Garcia
Stephen Goldrick
Jonathan Hernandez-Medina
Neil Jensen
Daveen Masias
Emily McKeel
Brandon McQuivey
Mary Mines
Jacqueline Oakley
Jason Schmidt
Corey Taylor
Evan White
Hiram Webb
John Webber

Scott Wormell

Facilities Tech II

Barrett Wurtsmith

Facilities Tech II

Alex Balmori

AMF - Custodian

Toby Lohrer

Facilities Tech II – Road

Maris Gill - Customer Service

Maris Gill, the newest member of RFTA's Customer Service Team. She will be working Monday through Friday, 9 to 5, at the AMF Customer Service Desk.

Maris has an extensive and varied background in customer service, education, leadership, music, and hospitality. Here are some fun things about Maris:

She is a fiddle player enjoys playing live music all over the valley with her husband, Ian Rice (a RFTA Bus Operator).Loves whitewater and is looking forward to paddling all of the creeks and rivers this summer. Has a degree focused on disability in society and she is very passionate about accessibility and inclusion in the work place. Her first name rhymes with Paris.

Natalie Pimentel Rosario - HR Assistant

Natalie moved to the valley last year from Puerto Rico. She is here with her two children and little dog. Natalie loves the beauty of the valley and all it has to offer. However, she is anxious for her thermostat to acclimate to the winter temperatures.

Patrick Glazer - ITS

I am originally from Memphis, TN and moved to the valley last January. I am the new Systems Analyst II in the IT department. I got my start in IT working for Concentra Healthcare troubleshooting Radiology hardware and software.

My interests outside of work include boxing, rugby, football, and hiking.
However, I am looking forward to getting out on the slopes for the first time this season!

Leah Whitney
Systems Analyst I

Kalon DeMent
VM CDL Service Worker

Gracie Galliher
VM Non-CDL Bus Cleaner

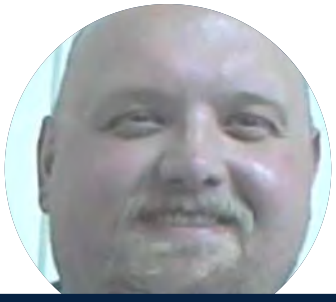
Jose Lopez
VM CDL Service Worker

Jason Schelhaas - ITS

We have a new addition to our leadership team! Please join in welcoming Jason Schelhaas as our new Interim Director of Information Technology. Jason brings a wealth of experience and expertise in the technology field, and we are excited to have him on board.

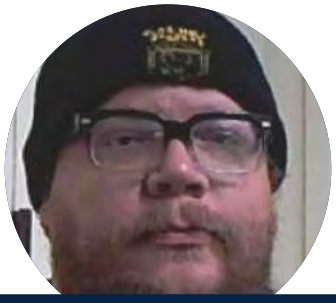
Jason joins RFTA from the Fortune 500 medical transport company, Global Medical Response (GMR/AMR/Envision Healthcare). At GMR he held several leadership roles for the IT team, including Director of IT Infrastructure and Operations, and was responsible for leading the teams to engineer IT Infrastructure solutions and provide support for the world's largest first responder organization. His strategic vision and innovative approach will undoubtedly drive our technology initiatives to new heights, supporting RFTA's growth and success.

PROMOTIONS



Dale Elwood - Dispatch

Dale came to us with a background as a Gas Plant Operator and a Tire Technician/ Mechanic. He has been with RFTA since the winter of 2021.



Jerimie Richardson - Dispatch

Jerimie came to RFTA with a degree in mass communication and a focus in journalism. He has been working with RFTA since the winter of 2016.

More Promotions

Ben Ludlow - Program Manager

Andrew Haupert - Facilities Tech II AMF

Logan Morley - Transit Mechanic

ASE CERTIFICATIONS EARNED

Eric Duarte

Eric has passed H5 for Suspension and Steering.

Logan Morley

Logan passed H8 for Transit Buses: Preventive Maintenance and Inspections.

IT TEAM

ANDY HERMES

Andy Hermes – is moving on to new adventures. He has been with RFTA IT department for 18 years, 9 months and 6 hours. (but who's counting) Andy is looking forward to testing his new super power Tesla on a road trip to San Antonio. After that, he has scheduled a trip overseas. Upon return, Andy is excited to pursue new interests in cyber security.

DAN BLANKENSHIP + ANDY HERMES

ANDY HERMES + PHIL SCHULTZ + CHRIS BELMONT

Joe Bair

RFTA years of service: 10.5

Joe Bair – Signs off after 10 ½ years as a Project Manager. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to spend the last 10 ½ years working with RFTA. I learned a great deal from all of my co-workers and feel that my knowledge grew considerably during my time as Project Manager. It was a pleasure to be a part of many notable projects over the years.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE LITTLE ONE!

Jose Salguero Jr (Vehicle Maintenance):
Mattias Aaron was born November 10

Out with 2023

As we approach year end, we will need to close the Travelers' books by January 31, 2024. As a result, please submit any Traveler's related invoices for the 2023 calendar year to Accounts Payable by ***Friday, January 5, 2024 at Noon*** so that the invoices can be included in the ***Tuesday, January 9, 2024*** A/P Check Run. If you receive any 2023 Traveler's invoices after these dates, please let me know.

If you currently have any non-Traveler's related invoices for the 2023 calendar year, please send these invoices to Accounts Payable as well, by the above deadlines as well, as these invoices can be included in our monthly financial reporting for December 2023. Our last scheduled Accounts Payable Check Run to include any ***2023*** invoices (including any petty cash reimbursement requests for 2023 receipts) is ***February 13, 2024***. Please reach out to vendors as needed. Similar to prior years, we plan to close RFTA's books in February 2024, ***after the above*** dates, and it's helpful for us to keep all 2023 invoices coming into Accounts Payable sooner rather than later.

In with 2024 Benefit Elections

As we strive to ensure accuracy and transparency in your benefits, we kindly remind you to take a moment to review your paystub on ***January 5, 2024***. This is an essential step to confirm that your benefit election deductions align with your selections.

Your diligence in verifying this information will help guarantee that your chosen benefits are accurately reflected in your pay and avoid any potential discrepancies. We value your commitment to staying informed and encourage you to reach out to HR promptly should you notice any discrepancies or require clarification regarding your benefit deductions. If corrections are needed, contact ***Megan Faichney*** at ***mfaichney@rfta.com*** / ***970-384-4878***

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Your proactive review will contribute to a seamless benefits experience for all.

Exciting News: Boost Your Wealth Potential!

Prepare for a game-changing opportunity this March! RFTA is gearing up to match a percentage of your contributions to your 457b. Those matching funds will be deposited in your 401a account. Stay tuned for the full scoop! This incredible change aims to ignite your investment spirit—whether it's kickstarting your investment journey or elevating your current contributions, now is the time to take advantage of this remarkable chance to grow your wealth. Don't miss out! Please note that if you are currently contributing to your 457b account with a flat dollar amount, you will be required to adjust your contribution to a percentage amount.

Who and Where is HR

The BEST way to contact HR is by email to:

hr@rfta.com

The HR department is located at 401 23rd Street Suite 207 in Glenwood Springs - the Valley Professional Building. This building is next to Alpine Bank on Grand Ave.

Erin Kemp

Interim HR Director
Works remotely
ekemp@rfta.com | 384.4952

Maria Vazquez

Work Comp/Accidents
Works remotely on Tuesdays
mvazquez@rfta.com | 384.4950

Megan Faichney

Benefits
mfaichney@rfta.com | 384.4878

Terri Rider

General Questions
trider@rfta.com | 384.4889

Stacy Summers

Sr. Generalist II
ssummers@rfta.com | 384.4854

Natalie Pimental Rosario

HR Assistant
nrosario@rfta.com | 384.4906

When you call one of us, please leave a voice message.
We can better respond when you leave your name and reason for calling.

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 / Sam Rose

Town of Carbondale
Colin Laird / Ben Bohmfalk

Eagle County
Jeanne McQueeney /
Kathy Chandler-Henry

City of Glenwood Springs
Shelley Kaup / Ingrid Wusso

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

Erin Kemp
Interim HR Director | 970.384.4952

Maria Vazquez
HR & Risk Mgmt. Manager | 970.384.4950

Megan Faichney
Benefits Manager | 970.384.4878

Terri Rider
Business Support Specialist III | 970.384.4889

Stacy Summers
Sr. Generalist II | 970.384.4854

Natalie Pimental Rosario
HR Assistant | 970.384.4906

Jamie Tatsuno
Communications Manager | 970.384.4864

Joni Christenson
Communications Specialist | 970.384.4871

Yazmin Carlson
Creative Communications Associate | 970.989.1184

New Barriers

A new type of driver barrier has been installed for evaluation purposes. This door functions a little different than our other barriers and functions similar to a car door. It is equipped with electric windows and cooling fans.

Employee Housing

RFTA has hired an outside party to assist with our Employee Housing Strategy. They are focusing on Affordability, Availability and Equity.

Affordability includes concerns of high rent/mortgage and not being able to allow anything to go towards savings or emergency repairs and maintenance. High interest rates for those wanting to buy. First/Last/Security for renters is also a barrier. Due to affordability, the employee is often forced to live further from the work site, thus increasing costs to vehicle expenses and taking more of a tole on personal health.

Suggestions for potential strategies include assistance for financial; such as help for startup, low interest loans or perhaps a housing savings fund. Another possibility is offering counseling "How To" for financial and housing options. Another possibility is partnering with local governments and organizations.

Availability refers to the size and type of housing, the quality of the unit/property, lack of inventory and the location.

Suggestions are to look for new developments/leases which will accommodate families and/or pets, review and update our current housing policy, considering a "crash pad" at the facilities, or maybe introduce a RV parking location. Another potential strategy is to have employee shuttle services.

Equity is designed to maintain the housing in spite of the market/family situation. At current, employee housing is typically for one stage of life; singles. The rent, or, listed selling price, steadily increases each year.

A few strategies noted are to evaluate the employee rent payment based on income, rather than a fixed amount. Financial assistance for those not in RFTA housing will also be assessed.

In the next phase of this study, all strategies will be evaluated to determine which are best suited for RFTA to pursue.

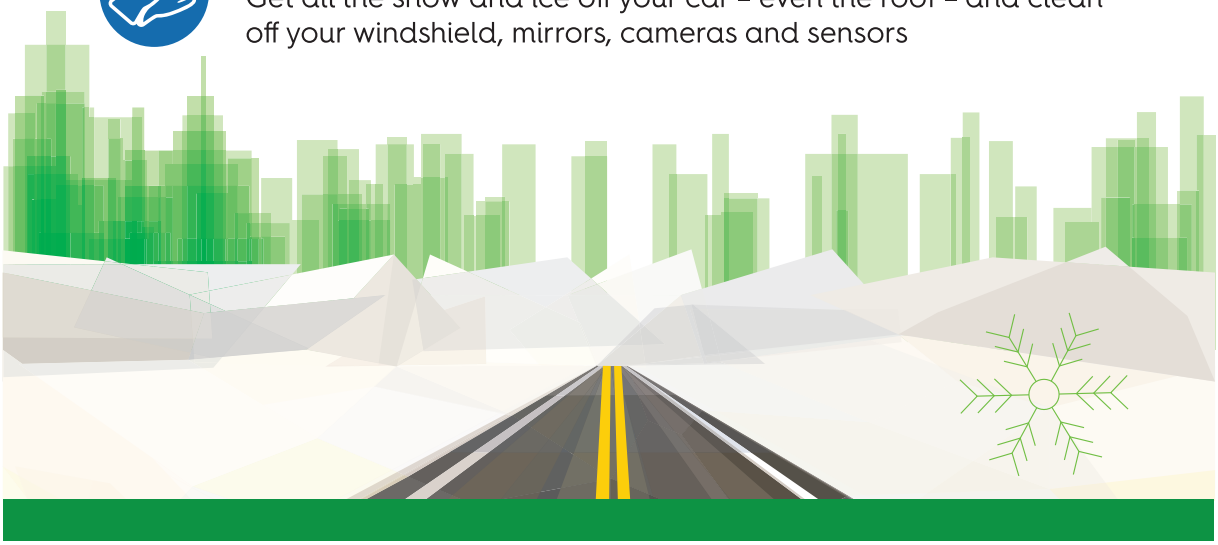
Winter Driving: Take it SLOW

Stop speeding:
Slow down, increase following distances and allow extra time to get to your destination

Learn about safety technologies:
Certain technologies like adaptive headlights, electronic stability control and anti-lock brakes can help

Outfit your vehicle:
Have an emergency kit in the trunk and check your tires to ensure proper tread depth for winter weather driving

Wipe everything off:
Get all the snow and ice off your car – even the roof – and clean off your windshield, mirrors, cameras and sensors



Get to your destination safely.

nsc Member

Visit nsc.org for more resources.

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Conducir en invierno: Tómelo con CALMA

Conduzca despacio:
Reduzca la velocidad, aumente la distancia detrás de otros vehículos y planee más tiempo para llegar a su destino.

Aprenda más sobre las tecnologías de seguridad:
Determinadas tecnologías, como los faros adaptativos, el control de estabilidad electrónico y los frenos antibloqueo, pueden ayudar.

Limpie todo:
Antes de conducir, retire toda la nieve y el hielo del vehículo, incluso del techo, y limpie el parabrisas, los espejos y los sensores.

MAntenga bien su vehículo:
Coloque un kit de emergencia en la cajuela y verifique sus neumáticos para asegurarse de que la profundidad del dibujo sea la correcta para conducir durante el clima de invierno.

Llegue a salvo a su destino.

nsc Member

Para obtener más información, visite nsc.org.

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OCTOBER PILLARS 2023

CONGRATULATIONS

Abel Mercado (Vehicle Maintenance)

Abel Mercado has been with RFTA since September 2014, in the capacity a CDL Service Worker. Stewart Clark, his foreman, wants to recognize Abel for his dedicated efforts. Sometimes we overlook the employees who do not make any waves, or who perform their work duties faithfully without the need for recognition. Able quietly does his work and helps others do theirs, without complaint. Able is one of the individuals in Vehicle Maintenance who makes the systems and processes work flawlessly, by exceeding expectations and assisting other employees meet their work expectations.

Anna Phillips (Operations)

Anna Phillips has been with RFTA since October 2015, currently in the capacity of a Customer Service Business Specialist. Rebecca Borges, her colleague, wants to recognize Anna for her dedicated efforts.

Anna has gone above and beyond in all scenarios. She assists other employees on a regular basis with ease and a smile on her face! She creates a comforting and welcoming environment to all who interact with her. As our front desk manager, she helps our customers regularly with retrieving passes, lost items, and resolving complaints! She has also developed training materials which has ultimately improved the methods and procedures of the customer service role.

Anna regularly advocates for the proper treatment of marginalized communities. She stands up for our disabled community members and the overall wellness of the valley as a whole. Anna Phillips is an absolute asset to RFTA and a light in the lives of anyone who knows her. She is smart, kind, hilarious, an incredible mother and friend; she is overall someone I look up to and model myself after in my daily activities. I have only known a select few people that deserve this award as much as she does.

Blake Williams (IT)

Blake Williams has been with RFTA since November 2019, in the capacity of Computer Help Desk, AVL & CAD Technician. Anna Phillips, his colleague, wants to recognize Blake for his dedicated efforts.

Blake is always willing to jump right in and fix whatever IT issue you might be having. No matter when you ask for help or what he's doing, he's always quick to respond. Not only is he quick to respond, give information, and take care of any issues, he's kind and thoughtful while he does it. I appreciate him, his hard work, and all the help I've received from him.

NOVEMBER PILLARS 2023

Megan Faichney (HR)

Megan Faichney has been with RFTA since April 2019, currently in the capacity HR-Benefits. Blake Williams and Mike Hermes, her colleagues, want to recognize Megan for her dedicated efforts.

I would like to recognize Megan for all that she's done making the transition from Finance to HR with little guidance during the Covid pandemic and many other obstacles that were sent her way. She has in many ways helped everyone employed by RFTA.

Megan shows up to, is involved in, and almost always is the planner of any and all outside events involving the public. I have a hard enough time planning my boy's birthday parties! That alone takes much time and planning. Megan sets these up flawlessly and with a great smile.

She goes above and beyond contacting me regarding my wife wanting a ski pass. Just a feeling of a single individual that seems to only care about your needs when you are aware there are many more like me she treats the same. That is not ordinary or easy in any department.

RFTA is lucky to have a huge group of people from a small area that work so hard together to keep really just buses going in a circle. She exemplifies what RFTA is made of and how far some will go outside of work hours to make that happen. Kudos to her!
Thank you, Megan, for your hard work!

Just a suggestion but you should nominate Megan for a pillar award. I see her daily at the bank and she has been doing double duty getting the open enrollment out to all of us. She is also a great colleague to work with and we will miss here at the bank now that she is moving to 23rd street.

CONGRATULATIONS

Tyler Husfloen (Vehicle Maintenance)

Tyler Husfloen has been with RFTA since May 2011, in the capacity of a Lead Mechanic. Stewart Clark, his supervisor, wants to recognize Tyler for his dedicated efforts.
Tyler came back to RFTA after a few years away and quickly became a Vehicle Maintenance Leadman. While Tyler was away the qualifications to become a Leadman became more difficult. A Vehicle Maintenance Leadman requires the certification of "Master Transit Technician" from Automotive Service Excellence (ASE). To earn the Master certification a technician must pass eight grueling tests, on your own time. Tyler earned his Master Transit Technician certificate in break-neck time. Congratulations Tyler!

Mike Jacques (Operations)

Mike Jacques has been with RFTA since July 2006, in the capacity of a CDL Bus Operator. Rick Holtz, one of his supervisors, wants to recognize Mike for his dedicated efforts.

Mike has proven to be dependable by never refusing to work

late and cover sick calls for Ride Glenwood.
He is able to quickly solve problems on the road, and is always willing to work late and always comes through in the clutch. I wish we had 200 employees like Mike Jacques.

DECEMBER PILLARS 2023

Trevor Aldridge (Operations)

Trevor Aldridge has been with RFTA since April 2021, currently in the capacity of a Road Supervisor. Nancy Hostetler, his colleague, wants to recognize Trevor for his dedicated efforts.

I would like to recognize Trevor for conducting excellent accident investigations. An Operations Road Supervisor is tasked with accident investigation among other duties. Trevor's investigation statements are thorough, detailed and informative. He clearly states his thoughtful determinations. Trevor has also shared several excellent suggestions for making the accident notification procedure better. I appreciate his fresh ideas to improve communication with employees.

CONGRATULATIONS

Colin Bergquist (Vehicle Maintenance)

Colin Bergquist has been with RFTA since December 2015, in the capacity of a CDL Service Worker. Stewart Clark, his supervisor, wants to recognize Colin for his dedicated efforts. Colin is a quiet individual who is very observant. An observant person can be a big help to a team.

Colin notices little things which can become big things and shares this information with his Leadman and Foreman. In a fast-paced work environment, Hostling from 2pm to Midnight, Colin has prevented a number of problems from occurring by being observant, thank you Colin for watching out for the team.

Yazmin Carlson (Communications/Marketing)

Yazmin Carlson has been with RFTA since January 2023, in the capacity of the Creative Communications Associate.

Megan Faichney, her colleague, wants to recognize Yazmin for her dedicated efforts.

Yazmin was a tremendous help to me before open enrollment was active. She dedicated time to help me with the communication on Open Enrollment, edited and created flyers. She translated flyers into Spanish to ensure everyone in RFTA has the proper information in their preferred language. I am very thankful for Yazmin's help this open enrollment. Yazmin, I really appreciate all of the effort and keeping a smile on your face while helping!

PILLARS AMONGST US

CONGRATULATIONS

PUMPKIN CARVING EVENT

WILLIAM CALDERON - OPERATIONS

JAMIE TATSUNO - COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING

CHRIS BELMONT - OPERATIONS

SARAH FAICHNEY - FACILITIES

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CHILI COOK OFF WINNERS

AMF WINNERS

1st Mike Christensen

2nd John Blair

3rd Mark Scruton

CARBONDALE WINNERS

1st Angela Henderson

2nd Joni Christensen

3rd Brett Meredith

GMF WINNERS

1st Kevin Craig

2nd Tim Madden

3rd Lori Hubit

CLOSING THOUGHT

Your strength is revealed in challenging times; embrace difficulties as opportunities for growth and resilience - Marcus Aurelius