



In Transit September/October 2011

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



*From the desk
of the General
Manager*

Financial reprieve: time to look forward

In August, the Metropolitan King County Council took the courageous step of approving the two-year Congestion Reduction Charge. The charge adds \$20 per year to the cost of licensing a car in King County, and provides us with temporary new funding so we can look forward to some relative financial stability in the short term.

This will give us breathing room to more confidently pursue new services like RapidRide; to improve upon our current services and make them more cost-effective by shifting resources from less-used routes to ones where they do the most good; and to move away from the longstanding Downtown Seattle Ride Free Area service.

We can continue to focus on supporting and sustaining our recent ridership gains, and add to the many successes we attained during this period of uncertainty—including the successful RapidRide A Line launch last fall; the startup of the Bellevue-Redmond RapidRide B Line on Oct. 1 (see page 3); strong positive ridership response to SR-520 service improvements as we prepare for tolling; a national award for one of our community-based In Motion marketing projects; and completion of

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Fred Banzuela poses with family members after learning he is Metro's 2010 Operator of the Year.

Banzuela named top operator for 2010

On Aug. 24, an unsuspecting Federico “Fred” Banzuela walked into a Central Base classroom and was surprised to find colleagues, family members, friends, and well-wishers gathered to honor him as Metro’s 2010 Operator of the Year. Joining the celebration were King County Executive **Dow Constantine**, King County Councilmember **Larry Gossett**, Department of Transportation Director **Harold Taniguchi**, Metro’s General Manager **Kevin Desmond**, and Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587 President **Paul Bachtel**.

Banzuela began driving for Metro in 1980. For most of his 31-year career, he has worked as a report operator, standing by to fill in for drivers who are absent. This requires that he be able to drive any of 30 different routes operating from his base, often at a moment’s notice. In light of this, his 25-year safe-driving award represents an exceptional achievement. His career

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General Manager

the Central/Atlantic Base expansion (see page 7).

Under the circumstances, these achievements are remarkable. While we can't breathe easy just yet, I think we've earned the right to pause for a moment and celebrate our accomplishments.

We've achieved a lot, against great odds, during the financial turmoil of the past few years. We've managed to maintain our services by reducing expenses, raising revenues, and implementing performance audit recommendations. Looking to the future, we achieved a new countywide consensus on how to manage and allocate service resources through our new strategic plan.

Where do we go from here? It's time to double our efforts and make those who expressed faith in us proud...and that goes beyond just King County leadership. It includes our customers and all taxpayers in King County. During the Council decision process, we received a huge amount of public support. We owe those supporters a lot, and we need to start paying that debt.

One way we can repay our supporters is by continuing to provide superior service and positive interactions with our excellent employees. In the last issue of *In Transit*, we honored our Transit Wall of Fame nominees and the Vehicle Maintenance Employee of the Year. This issue celebrates our 2010 Operator of the Year (see page 1).

Thank you, everyone, for all your contributions to Metro's success.

— Kevin Desmond, General Manager

In Transit

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to *In Transit*, KSC-TR-0824, or contact Anna Clemenger: 206-263-6482 or anna.clemenger@kingcounty.gov.



We'll Get You There

Produced by Transportation Office of Communications
Editor: Anna Clemenger
Transit Coordination: Bob Simpson
Staff Photographer: Ned Ahrens
Graphic Design: Diane Chaudiere



Electric vanpools debut at Children's Hospital

The nation's first all-electric public transit vanpools quietly started their engines at Seattle Children's Hospital on Aug. 30 as four Nissan Leaf cars were added to the commute options of Children's employees. "Sharing a ride to work is an environmentally healthy way to commute," said King County Executive Dow Constantine, who presided at the event, "and Seattle Children's employees just got greener by signing up for Metro's new electric-vehicle vanpools."

Adding electric vehicles to Metro's vanpool fleet enhances what is already one of the cleanest and greenest public transit systems in North America. Under its new Metropool program, Metro's Rideshare Operations group is buying 20 Nissan Leafs to pilot the use of electric-vehicle technology. This program will also support the installation of charging stations at major employer sites and transportation hubs such as park-and-rides and ferry terminals.



Vanpool commuters at Children's Hospital in Seattle check out their new zero-emission ride.

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Banzuela top operator

was briefly interrupted in 2004 when, as a member of the Washington State National Guard, he was activated for a year of military service.

Because he drives a different assignment every day, Banzuela doesn't have regular customers, but he still works tirelessly and without complaint to get all his riders where they need to go, safely and on time. His work during one snowstorm prompted a customer to comment, "He's a god among men! He did an awesome job navigating us through icy

roads and away from unsafe drivers to our downtown destination."

To the rest of the operators at his base, Banzuela is known as "Pops," a reliable and supportive source of information and advice who helps "keep the peace."

Banzuela was named Central Base's Operator of the Month in October 2010, then chosen by all 2010 Operators of the Month as the 2010 Operator of the Year. He has been married to wife Evelyn for 33 years and has two grown children and two grandchildren.

RapidRide brings new technologies to Redmond, Bellevue

With the start of service on Oct. 1, an industry-leading suite of transit intelligent transportation systems has been incorporated into Metro's new RapidRide B Line between Redmond and Bellevue.

The system integrates transit signal priority to keep buses moving, real-time information signs that show bus arrival times, and ORCA card readers at bus stations to speed passenger boarding. A high-speed wireless and fiber-optic network connects RapidRide buses with central systems. The same network is used at Metro bases, giving every bus in the fleet the same capabilities as RapidRide buses when they operate on corridors with

these systems. On the B Line route alone, 32 intersections have transit signal priority and 19 stations have next-bus arrival signs and ORCA card readers.

Other organizations are taking note of Metro's innovations in this area. The use of these technologies on the RapidRide A Line made Metro a finalist for ITS America's annual Best of ITS award, due to be announced in October at the ITS World Congress in Florida.



Phillip Kinsley with the Office of Information Resource Management sets up some behind-the-scenes technology for the B Line.

Reichert tours RapidRide lines



Congressman Dave Reichert, third from right, was joined by Metro General Manager Kevin Desmond, left; King County Councilmember Jane Hague, third from left; and other dignitaries on a tour of RapidRide routes and facilities in August.

On August 23, staff members from the Executive Office, Department of Transportation, and Transit Division hosted U.S. Congressman **Dave Reichert** on a tour to see the new construction on the B Line in Bellevue. Also on the tour were King County Councilmember **Jane Hague**, City of Renton Councilmember **Greg Taylor**, and Bellevue Deputy Mayor **Conrad Lee**.

The group saw the new RapidRide passenger amenities at the future station adjacent to Crossroads Mall before boarding a RapidRide bus to Renton. On the way, the group checked out RapidRide bus features and staff members discussed how RapidRide serves as a catalyst for economic development.

In Renton, they were joined by Renton Mayor **Denis Law**. The Bellevue and Renton officials expressed excitement and support for the start of the B Line (which will run between Bellevue and Redmond) in October and F Line (Burien – Renton) in 2013.

The tour was a rare opportunity to demonstrate to Congressman Reichert the features, benefits, and local support for RapidRide. Metro stands to benefit from two Very Small Starts grants, totaling over \$37 million, for the E and F lines. These grants have been included in the President's budget but still need to be appropriated by Congress.

SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division



Operator Everett Gear shows a cyclist how to get a bike on and off the racks on Metro buses.

■ **Event promotes biking in White Center** — Metro’s In Motion staffers heard about a couple of barriers to bike use in White Center: lack of access to bike shops and not knowing how to put bikes on buses. To address these, they teamed up with local partners and sponsored a “Tunes and Tune-ups” event on Aug. 24. Local bands provided free music, trained students from the Major Taylor Project fixed flats and did basic bike maintenance, and professional bike mechanics handled more complicated repairs. The Cascade Bicycle Club offered free helmets and helmet fit checks. Metro supplied a bus and a driver who demonstrated how to get bikes on and off the rack. Other partners supporting the event included Alki Bike and Board, BikeWorks, DubSeaBikes, King County Food and Fitness, Proletariat Pizza, Sustainable West Seattle, the White Center Community Development Association, and the Yes Foundation. In Motion works directly with neighborhoods in



Burien’s new Park-and-Ride garage is open for business.

King County to increase awareness of the transportation network and to help bridge barriers to using alternatives to driving alone.

■ **Burien Park-and-Ride garage opens** — The grand opening of the new 504-stall Burien Park-and-Ride garage was celebrated Aug. 30. The new, \$20.6-million facility was funded by Metro, Sound Transit, and the Federal Transit Administration, and is part of a transit-oriented development project on the Burien Park-and-Ride property. Going to a vertical parking option freed up the remainder of the lot for mixed-use development, including affordable housing. The garage is Metro’s first parking facility to provide Level 2 (220V) electric vehicle charging stations fitted with credit card readers.

■ **Transit receives security grant** — Metro has been awarded \$2.8 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Transit

Security Grant Program. These funds will help Metro prepare and plan for terrorism events, enhance the ability of employees and Metro Transit Police to respond to major events, and provide for the training of a replacement explosive-detection canine team when Metro’s current bomb dog, “Stevie,” is ready to retire.

■ **Fall foliage and vintage buses** — What better way to enjoy fall color than a scenic four-hour ride on a vintage Metro bus? On Sunday, Oct. 16, the Metro Employees Historic Vehicle Association fall color tour will cruise the quiet back roads of the Cascade foothills in eastern King County, allowing passengers to enjoy the changing colors of autumn leaves along the way. There will be stops for photos and lunch. Buses depart from Second Avenue S and S Main Street at 11 a.m., and the fare is \$5 (children aged five and under ride free). For details, call 206-684-1816 or visit www.mehva.org.



County Executive Dow Constantine, at podium, speaks at an event marking Metro’s participation in the Safe Place program. King County Councilmember Kathy Lambert is at his right.

■ **Metro buses declared Safe Places** — When a youth in crisis needs help, all he or she has to do is approach a Metro bus driver and say, “I need a safe place.” The driver will make a call, and a youth service provider will arrange to meet the youth and transport him or her to safety. “Our operators are accustomed to serving as the community’s eyes and ears,” said Operations Manager **Jim O’Rourke**. “Through this program, they can now additionally serve as a bridge in helping to get kids off the street and into the hands of a youth resource agency that can help.” At an Aug. 31 event announcing Metro’s participation in the national network of transit systems and businesses serving as Safe Places, King County Executive **Dow Constantine** said, “Our coaches are out at all hours of the day in all parts of the county, and this offer of a Safe Place should bring a little peace of mind to families. I thank our operators for taking this extra step to protect our region’s youths.” More information about the Safe Place program is available online at www.nationalsafeplace.org and www.youthcare.org.



Performance corner

Service changes and customer satisfaction

ORCA provides new data

The ORCA fare card is more than just an easy way to pay for transit service. It also serves as a rich data source that can help us better understand transit use patterns and make more informed decisions. Each time an ORCA user taps or loads a card, it creates a record. These records tell us which coach was boarded as well as the location, route, time, and fare paid. Staff members can analyze individual cards or summarize sets of cards that were distributed through promotional programs or business accounts. The identities of individual cardholders are not disclosed.

One example of ORCA data use is in pricing for annual ORCA Passport contracts with employers and schools. Passports cover unlimited trips on buses, light rail, the streetcar, commuter rail, and the King County Water Taxi, and usually include guaranteed-ride-home service and vanpool benefits. Metro now uses ORCA ridership data to determine usage and corresponding fare revenue. Currently, more than 700 businesses in the region participate in the Passport program.

We can also use ORCA data to evaluate programs that offer ORCA cards as incentives for using transit or other alternatives to driving alone. In May, about 45,000 people who live or work near Route 245 were offered an unloaded ORCA card and a \$10 voucher to load onto it. Almost 4,000 people took us up on the deal. The ORCA database showed that almost 1,400 cards were loaded with the voucher amounts or used on transit, and 422 cardholders added more money to the card, generating an estimated \$14,000 in new revenue in the first two months (see table below).

Systemwide, 45 percent of weekday boardings are paid for with ORCA cards. As ORCA use increases, we’re likely to find even more applications of ORCA data. ORCA ridership counts may augment automated passenger count data. Estimates may be made on transfers, providing clues about origins and destinations. ORCA data could help with route planning, system improvements, fare decisions, program design, and budgeting, as well as other research efforts.

ORCA summary data from Route 245 evaluation (May 10-July 29, 2011)	
Addresses that received mailer offering ORCA card and voucher	45,000
Recipients who requested ORCA card and \$10 voucher	3,943
Recipients who redeemed the voucher and loaded the card with the \$10	1,393
Recipients who added their own money to the card	422
Estimated amount of personal money added	\$14,000

In Transit online

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available on the King County website at www.kingcounty.gov/InTransit.

KUDOS IN TRANSIT



Major Lisa Mulligan now heads Metro Transit Police

■ **Meet Metro's new transit police chief** — **Major Lisa Mulligan** is the new chief of the Metro Transit Police, succeeding **Major Dave Jutilla**, who was promoted to Operations Chief in the King County Sheriff's Office. Mulligan, a 25-year veteran of the Sheriff's Office, joined the transit police unit three-and-a-half years ago, and has provided excellent service to Metro's employees and customers. During her first two-and-a-half years with Metro's police unit, Mulligan served as its operations captain, overseeing patrol personnel and functions. She then spent a year as the unit's administrative captain, overseeing criminal investigations, street crimes, and the joint transit anti-terrorism team. *In Transit* congratulates Major Mulligan and Major Jutilla on their promotions, and thanks them for their service to Metro.

■ **VM superintendents chosen for prestigious leadership classes** — Vehicle Maintenance Superintendent **Deb Stenoien** was accepted to participate in the 2012 Leadership APTA class, a premier professional development program designed to develop and support the next generation of leaders in the public transportation industry and APTA. Each year, only 25 individuals are selected from among all APTA member applicants to participate in a year-long program that includes intensive workshops, conferences, class leadership projects, teleconferences, online meetings, and web-based events. Stenoien follows in the footsteps of **Christine Anderson**, currently a 2011 Leadership APTA participant, and past graduates **Kevin Desmond**, Metro's general manager, and Vehicle Maintenance Manager **Randy Winders**. VM Superintendent **Larry Ward** was accepted to participate in the Eno Center for Transportation Leadership Seminar for Transit Mid-

Managers, a leadership course tailored specifically for mid-level managers in public transportation agencies and companies that serve the transit industry. This course is an important element in Metro's approach to middle manager development and succession planning.

■ **Torchlight preparations pay off** — Once again, Metro's meticulous planning for the July 30 Seafair Run and Torchlight Parade paid off. Clear, sunny weather with temperatures in the upper 70s drew an estimated crowd of 300,000, but there were no major bus problems. Reroutes worked well. Regular service coaches encountered only typical Torchlight Parade delays; post-event coach extras were used to fill trips, quickly returning regular service to on-time status. The 700-MHz radio system "talk group" feature was used for the first time, successfully. Service in the tunnel went very smoothly for both buses and Link light rail. At the



On top of the world

Congratulations to Metro General Manager Kevin Desmond, who climbed Mount Rainier during Labor Day weekend. While enjoying a fabulous view from the summit, he modeled the RapidRide cap he carried with him on the climb, in honor of the Oct. 1 launch of the B Line (see page 3).

peak, trains operated on a five- to six-minute headway. Tunnel buses loaded passengers using both doors to minimize dwell times at stations, keeping train delays to a minimum. Even though there were extremely large crowds waiting for service, the post-event clearing of tunnel stations took place without incident.

Transit operators of the month

August 2011

Atlantic Base: **Michael Gutierrez**
 Central Base: **L. P. "Pat" Engrissei**
 Eastside Campus: **Paul Palazzo**
 North Base: **Matthew Lyons**
 Ryerson Base: **Norman Swoboda**
 South Base: **Randall Garvin**

September 2011

Atlantic Base: **Michael Freund**
 Central Base: **(no nominee)**
 Eastside Campus: **Henry Turner**
 North Base: **Elynn Horton**
 Ryerson Base: **Paul Howie**
 South Base: **Hawthorne Zuber**

Service award achievements

In Transit congratulates the following employees on achieving service milestones in the fourth quarter of 2011:

40 years

Power and Facilities:

Brian Sullivan

Vehicle Maintenance:

Ray Hayashi



35 years

Operations:

Elmer Johnson
 and **Barry Samet**

Systems Development and Operations:

Roland Bradley

Vehicle Maintenance:

Kevin Kinsey



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On the Move

Service Development

Farhana Satti, administrator I — August 29
 (for retiring Joan Lewis)

Transit IT

Jana Lawlis, LAN administrator journey
 (term-limited) — July 6

Vehicle Maintenance

Antonio Calderon, mechanic — July 18

Marc Cook, mechanic — July 18

Alonzo D'Alessandro, sheet metal worker —
 August 8

Tyler Mathison, sheet metal worker —
 August 8

David McCudden, mechanic — July 18

Brandon Monroe, electronic technician —
 July 18

Michael Mooney, sheet metal worker —
 August 8

Patrick Skahan, sheet metal worker —
 August 8

Paul Veldhuis, mechanic — July 18

Seth Worden, mechanic — July 18

In our thoughts

David Gronlund, transit operator (Operations — East Base) passed away on July 21

Roland McVay, first-line supervisor (Operations — retired January 1; 48 years) passed away on July 12

New Atlantic/Central Base ops building opens

On Aug. 15, Atlantic/Central staffers moved into their new 45,000-square-foot Operations Building, marking the completion of the Atlantic/Central Base expansion program. The base now has the capability to dispatch an additional 185 buses.

In addition to dispatch and office functions, the new building houses Transit Safety, Service Quality, and Transit Training employees and provides a comfortable environment for the 1,100 full- and part-time bus drivers who will use the facility.

It offers locker facilities, exercise and recreation rooms, a cafeteria, and space for meetings, and the second floor features noise and sight separations, especially for people eating in the lunchroom or outside on the terrace. And the building meets LEED Gold certification requirements for lower environmental impacts and a better working environment for its occupants.

In the words of one bus driver passing through the new space, the new building "is a great reflection of the talented people that work for Metro Transit."



The new Atlantic/Central Base Operations Building is open for business.

Kudos to the Transit Design and Construction Section for ensuring that the Atlantic/Central Base expansion program was completed on time and under budget, returning about \$4 million to the capital budget program.



ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

Retirements

Design and Construction

Jeff Turner, engineer IV — July 6; 9+ years

General Manager Office

Roy Harrington, emergency management coordinator — September 30; 26+ years

Operations

Abdul Alidina, base superintendant (Ryerson Base) — September 30; 32+ years

Sandy Clayman, transit operator (South Base) — August 31; 20 years

Judith Douglas, transit operator (East Base) — October 1; 24 years

Bruce Fredrickson, transit operator (East Base) — September 1; 31 years

Manuel Herrera, transit operator (South Base) — August 31; 10 years

Dennis Naylor, transit operator (South Base) — August 31; 31 years

Dick Verzani, transit operator (South Base) — September 30; 34+ years

Gary Welty, transit operator (South Base) — September 20; 12 years

Service Development

Joan Lewis, administrator I — September 15; 23+ years

Systems Development and Operations

Martha Woodworth, project/program manager IV — September 1; 12+ years

Vehicle Maintenance

John “Jay” Costa, vehicle procurement administrator — August 2; 24+ years

Jim Glasgow, lead mechanic — September 30; 32+ years

Daryl Hamerly, mechanic 2nd — July 1; 31+ years

Neil Hodgson, transit parts specialist — September 30; 31+ years

Gary Irby, bus inspector/lead transit parts specialist — September 16; 32+ years

Rich Zelinsky, lead electronic technician — November 1; 24+ years

Promotions and Job Changes

Operations

Ramona Davis to base chief (East Base) from first-line supervisor (Atlantic/Central Base)

Michael Thornton to base chief (East Base) from first-line supervisor (Communications Control Center)

Metro Transit Police

Major Dave Jutilla to operations chief (KC Sheriff’s Office) from MTP chief

Major Lisa Mulligan to MTP chief from MTP administrative captain

Rail

Tony Martin to acting rail vehicle maintenance chief (graveyard) from electro-mechanic (for Rob Blackburn, promoted to manager at Tacoma Link)

Keith Kaufman to lead grounds specialist from grounds specialist

John Lee to rail supervisor from first-line supervisor (Transit Operations/Service Quality)

Sales and Customer Services

Frank Lacey to revenue coordinator (Revenue Processing Center) from transit operator (Operations)

Benjamin Ost to functional analyst III from revenue coordinator (Revenue Processing Center)

Vehicle Maintenance

Bonnie Davis-Losey to acting chief from lead mechanic (East Base)

Don Henkel to acting chief (East Base) from lead mechanic (Bellevue Base)

Ryan Stringfellow to acting chief (Central Base) from mechanic (Atlantic Base)

Gary Tveit to acting chief from lead mechanic (Ryerson Base)

New hires

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

AngaLee Alexander, business and finance officer III — August 15

William McCoy, vanpool risk specialist — September 9

Tracy Roscher, transportation planner III — September 12

Breanna Weaver, fiscal specialist II — August 16

Power and Facilities

Phil Manaois, transit electronic communications specialist (term-limited) — July 27

Miguel Ramirez, transit electronic communications specialist (term-limited) — July 27

Andrew Samorano, transit electronic communications specialist (term-limited) — August 1

Victor Supnet, transit electronic communications specialist (term-limited) — July 27

Sales and Customer Services

Melanie Johndrow, assigned customer information specialist — July 25

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