

December 2005 - January 2006

RTA

You Can Make It Happen!

(See column 4)

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Transit Calendar - 2006

January 4, 2006 Missouri General Assembly convenes

January 9, 2006 Kansas Legislature convenes

February 7, 2006 Transportation Day in Jefferson City

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The Metro wants you to be a part of their Customer Action Team (CAT)

The Metro is recruiting bus riders to join a committee focused on increasing Metro ridership. This is a proactive, results-oriented partnership. A questionnaire must be completed. An internal committee will make the final membership selections.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must have ridden The Metro at least 1 month.
- Must be willing to serve for 6 months.
- Must be willing to be an active participant. Non-participating members will be replaced.

Visit <http://kcata.org/CAT.htm> or call 816-346-0200

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North Kansas City HOV/ Transit Lane

The RTA is working with the state and city officials on the possibility of making the HOV/Transit lane along Burlington Avenue a permanent component of transit operations in NKC

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RTA Creating a Grassroots Regional Advocacy Network

Join the RTA's region-wide grassroots advocacy network. It mobilizes when needed to contact legislators in order to successfully pass enabling legislation to create a regional funding mechanism for public transit in Kansas and Missouri. Legislators want to hear from their constituents that an issue is important to them.

RTA members will be enrolled automatically in the advocacy network; and the RTA is actively pursuing others throughout the community by contacting groups that have existing constituencies that may have an interest in furthering this cause. Please let the RTA know if you are interested or know of individuals or groups that should be contacted.

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Metro Transfer Abuse

In response to public opinion the Metro dropped their proposed change to their transfer policy. Currently that policy allows riders to get a transfer for no cost and use it anywhere in the system for the next two hours. In effect it is a two-hour pass for the cost of the original fare. For example, riders can make a short trip to the store and then return on the same route in the opposite direction without having to pay another fare. Although using a transfer in this manner is unique, it is common practice in this city and people rely on this feature.

In many cities transfers have a small cost, 10-25 cents, and they cannot be used for a round trip. In fact they

can't be used on the same route. They are designed to pick up another bus route in order to complete a journey. Kansas City is considered to have one of the most generous transfer policies in the country.

That is exactly why seeing people abuse the transfer policy is so disturbing. How many people have seen someone get a transfer and then pass it out a back window so a friend can ride for free? How many people pick up a transfer they don't need and then give it to a person selling transfers at a bus stop. **Yes, we have a black market in transfers.** If the fare is \$1 and people can buy a transfer from a hustler for 25 cents, many people will do it. The person that originally received the transfer didn't pay anything for it so they are happy to give it away. There are people around town who hustle for transfers then sell them at active stops. They must make enough money to make this behavior rewarding.

As the fare goes to \$1.25 the motivation to cheat the bus company increases, especially since it continues not to charge for the transfer. Hustlers may even get to raise their price and make more money.

The problem is that the Metro is losing money when transfers are given away and in the future will probably have to change policies to stop this drain in revenue, which hurts you and me. Changing the way transfers can be used, like the Metro almost did this time, and charging for transfers are real possibilities. Maybe people won't be so ready to give away a free ride if they had to pay for that transfer.

Even though the Metro has a \$1 fare, their average revenue per ride is only 50 cents. Part of that low return comes from legitimate reasons, like using the transfer, discounted fares for certain groups and monthly passes.

But what about all the free rides because of transfer abuse? That really brings down the revenue per ride. Our bus service isn't very expensive compared to most cities. If riders did not give away these transfers, this abuse would stop. Give the Metro a break and help them get something for the service they are providing. You and I expect to be paid for our work and so does the Metro.

Janet Rogers
RTA Board Member

High Gas Prices? Be part of the solution. You Can Make It Happen! Join the RTA

For the last three decades, we've seen it coming. And now it's here. The days of affordable gasoline for our daily commute are over. We must become less dependent on our cars.

Today, the average driver pays \$230-\$242 a month for a round trip to work*. If that reality has you searching for ways to give your car a rest, consider this: Today, that same Kansas City commuter can make the same trip to work by bus for only \$36 a month. And you don't have to pay for parking!

There's a problem. Our city's bus system today is only a skeleton of the network we need to have a viable transit system that gets everybody in every part of town where they need to go everyday.

But there's also a solution. Over the last several years the Mid-America Regional Council has developed a plan called **Smart Moves**, which can bring bus and light-rail service to every corner of the seven-county metropolitan area. It would require passage of a sales tax for a transportation district. A key element called the MAX has already been introduced by the Kansas City Area Transportation Authority, and has won instant popularity with its more frequent buses, faster trips, and rider comfort.

And here's how you can make it happen. Join us – **The Regional Transit Alliance** – as another member of a growing voice that can make **Smart Moves** a reality. We need your support – both moral and financial – to encourage your friends and neighbors and government leaders to rally for this plan. And when the time comes, we need your vote to put it in place.

As a member of the RTA you will be sent our monthly newsletter to keep you abreast of our work. You'll have a voice in our campaign. And when **Smart Moves** starts moving commuters around our city in the envi-

ronmentally-friendly and cost-efficient way we deserve, you will have the satisfaction of saying, **"I made that happen."**

Contact the RTA at www.kctransit.org or call Greg Lever at 816-471-6808

Wendall Anschutz
RTA Board Member

*Based on the KCATA Driving Cost Calculator with a 20 mile-per-day roundtrip, 25 miles/gallon mileage, work 22 days/month, average maintenance \$.497/mile and gas \$2-\$2.70/gallon, without parking.

PCC Streetcar Restoration

The restoration of a Kansas City streetcar is underway and we expect completion by June. It will be placed along the pedestrian mall behind Union Station. The location will allow easy access for viewing and it will be in good proximity to the pedestrian bridge linking the Crossroads district to Union Station.



Our streetcar will have authentic Kansas City Public Service colors.

February Newsletter:

New series-What does Smart Moves offer your community?

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TRANSIT NEWS

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MAILING LABEL