

RIVERSIDE TRANSIT AGENCY  
1825 Third Street  
Riverside, CA 92507

March 22, 2007

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
THRU: Larry Rubio, Chief Executive Officer  
FROM: *SR* Scott Richardson, Director of Marketing  
SUBJECT: Festival of Lights Service Update

Summary: At the July 27, 2006, meeting, the Board authorized the fifth year of bus service to and from the Mission Inn Festival of Lights Downtown Aglow from nine communities. The service utilized 40-passenger buses during four Saturdays in November and December.

Ridership in 2006 was as follows:

Date	Departure	Ridership	Goal
11/25	Mira Loma	80	80
11/25	Corona	5	80
12/2	Calimesa	80	80
12/2	Mead Valley	12	80
12/9	Hemet	40	40
12/9	San Jacinto	40	40
12/9	Temecula	66	80
12/16	Banning	56	80
12/16	Beaumont	<u>80</u>	<u>80</u>
	Total	459	640

An analysis of the data shows that generally higher ridership is obtained from cities further from Riverside, although there are some exceptions such as Mira Loma. In addition, informal surveys on board the buses showed that most of the customers were not regular RTA riders. Corona had low ridership because of ticket sales coordination issues at the site, and Mead Valley had low ticket sales.

Previous Years' Ridership:

2002

Service from: Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Corona, Hemet, San Jacinto, and Temecula  
Date: Nov. 29 (One day only—Festival of Lights Switch-on Ceremony)  
Ridership: Over 800

2003

Service from: Canyon Lake, Jurupa, Norco, Lake Elsinore, Moreno Valley, Murrieta, Perris, and Sun City  
Dates: Nov. 29, Dec. 6, Dec. 13 and Dec. 20.  
Ridership: Over 600

2004

Service from: Banning, Beaumont, Calimesa, Corona, Hemet, Mead Valley, San Jacinto, and Temecula  
Dates: Nov. 27, Dec. 4, Dec. 11, and Dec. 18.  
Ridership: 224 (Note: Near record rainfall and conflicts with local holiday events had negative effect on ridership)

2005

Service from: Moreno Valley, Perris, Norco, Rubidoux, Sun City, Murrieta, Lake Elsinore, and Canyon Lake  
Dates: Nov. 26, Dec. 3, Dec. 10 and Dec. 17  
Ridership: 518

In order to avoid conflicts with local events, staff analyzed the holiday event schedules in each city to optimize service for maximum potential ridership.

Marketing the Festival of Lights in 2006 was primarily focused at senior centers through posters, flyers, and working with the senior centers staff. Newspaper ads were also run in the *Press-Enterprise*, and a press release was issued to local media. The service was also advertised in the *Ride Guide* and on the Agency website.

RTA staff greeted riders at the departure points, and on-board holiday trivia quizzes and word searches were provided to entertain the customers.

Fiscal Impact:

Operating cost for the service was \$4,397. RTA collected \$918 in fares resulting in a farebox recovery of 21 percent. Approximately \$3,200 was spent in marketing the service, which was considered part of the Agency's general marketing program because it effectively marketed the entire bus system, confirmed RTA's commitment to involvement in community events, and offered residents the opportunity to experience RTA's service.

Committee Recommendation:

This item was discussed at the Board Budget and Administration and Board Operations Committee meetings of March 14, 2007. The Committees' members unanimously approved and recommended this item to the full Board of Directors for their consideration.

Recommendation:

Receive and file.