

# building for tomorrow



riverside transit agency 2005 annual report



GET ON  
& GO!

Fiscal Year 2005 was an exciting time for the Riverside Transit Agency, which laid the foundation for future growth and success.

The Agency purchased land for a future transit center and worked to improve the region's air quality by beginning construction on a new compressed natural gas fueling station. It launched campaigns to boost customer satisfaction, and developed groundbreaking programs to improve service efficiency.

It was also a time of growth and innovation, when RTA did what no other public transit agency in Southern California had done before by offering passengers free wireless Internet and satellite television. The service, which debuted in the spring aboard a handful of CommuterLink buses, made such a large splash among riders that RTA may introduce the same technology to other routes.

The Agency's financial health remained strong as its budget grew three percent from the prior fiscal year to reach \$38.5 million. The favorable results of an annual audit revealed that RTA is making excellent use of its funds and operating

effectively. The Agency also added new talent by hiring 71 employees, including a new Chief Operations Officer to help oversee the bus fleet operations and drivers.

Fiscal Year 2005 was an extraordinary period for the RTA family, and the future remains just as bright. With nearly 1.3 million people expected to move to the region over the next 20 years, RTA looks forward to the challenges that lie ahead and is eager to meet the transportation needs of all residents.



# the foundation for future success



**better customer service**

*RTA knows that running a fundamentally sound agency translates to better customer service and productivity. That's why RTA set high standards for itself during Fiscal Year 2005 and was committed to reaching its own milestones.*



### **New Software Boosts Agency Productivity**

RTA took a major technological step by installing new computer software designed to improve the way the Agency monitors its finances. RTA used a \$300,000 federal grant to install the cutting-edge software dubbed Oracle 11i. The software not only sharpened RTA's ability to track the money it spends, but it also saved RTA employees valuable time and boosted Agency productivity.

### **RTA Reaches Goal of No Lost Workdays**

A stepped-up effort to improve employee safety paid off during Fiscal Year 2005 when the Agency went the entire fiscal year without any of its 350-plus employees missing a workday due to a Workers Compensation injury. RTA staff worked hard to increase employee understanding of Workers Compensation and launched a loss-prevention committee to oversee and promote safety initiatives. Rather than miss a workday, injured employees who were unable to perform their regular tasks took on other jobs that matched their abilities. Those jobs ranged from delivering Ride Guides to helping passengers at major transit centers. Thanks to an aggressive approach to claims administration, safety and training, the Agency reduced its Workers Compensation costs by more than \$850,000 during the fiscal year.

### **Fare Structures Help Keep Up With Rising Costs**

A restructured fare system was implemented during Fiscal Year 2005 that allowed RTA to keep up with rising operational costs and improve customer service. The adjustments were made after several public hearings and followed a comprehensive study that solicited feedback from riders, bus drivers, transit agencies and other stakeholders. The proposed fares, which were the Agency's first in nearly five years, were determined to be within industry averages and deemed affordable by focus groups made up of RTA customers. Under the new policy, fixed-route fares for the general public and youth increased slightly to \$1.25 per trip, while seniors and disabled riders paid 60 cents per trip.

*Passenger service was taken to another level during Fiscal Year 2005 when RTA pioneered the use of free wireless Internet and satellite television aboard its buses.*



## COMMUTER LINK



### The Launch of Free Wireless Internet, Satellite TV

Two years after RTA released a fleet of buses designed to serve commuters, the Agency took the ambitious step of offering passengers free satellite television and wireless Internet services.

In May 2005, transportation officials and lawmakers from across the region unveiled RTA's first CommuterLink bus equipped with the new amenities. The service debuted on Route 202 between Temecula and Oceanside, making RTA the first in Southern California to offer its passengers free Internet and satellite television aboard public buses.

The amenities, paid for by a federal grant, allowed passengers to work their e-mail and surf the Web. Passengers could watch the latest news via satellite television or pass time sleeping or relaxing in the reclining cushioned seats while someone else fought the traffic.

Passengers have shown strong support for the new amenities with roughly one-quarter using the wireless Internet service and a whopping 86 percent watching the satellite television sometimes, often or all the time.

The positive results have prompted RTA officials to consider implementing the amenities on other CommuterLink routes that offer limited-stop service to main transit centers and Metrolink stations in Riverside and San Bernardino counties.



# service at another level



*RTA is proud of its involvement in the community and is always eager to receive suggestions and feedback from the public. One of the most beneficial ways for the Agency to interact with the public is through community events, which occur in a variety of places, ranging from senior centers to schools to annual festivals where RTA staff showcases its vehicles and speaks to residents about the benefits of public transportation. These events play a significant role in RTA's ability to measure its challenges and successes and learn the needs of prospective riders.*

## **Community Involvement**

RTA does more than just provide transportation to Riverside County residents. It also promotes public transportation through the advocacy group Transportation NOW and donates used buses to nonprofit groups.

## **Vehicle Donations**

Dozens of cities, churches, senior centers and non-profit groups are benefiting from RTA's bus donation program. The past few years have been busy with more than 30 buses given to nonprofit groups across the region. Fiscal Year 2005 was no exception for the surging program as RTA donated vehicles to groups such as Mission Worship Center and Crystal Waters Fellowship. The vehicles have surpassed their recommended service life so they are no longer capable of remaining in the RTA fleet, but they are in good running condition when donated. Because the vehicles have been used for Dial-A-Ride passengers, they are equipped with wheelchair lifts and are perfect for organizations that transport senior citizens and disabled passengers.

## **Transportation NOW**

Thirteen years ago, RTA's Board of Directors created Transportation NOW to promote the discussion of public transportation alternatives. Since then, the program has grown to include three chapters: Corona/Norco, Moreno Valley/Perris and the San Geronio Pass area. Each chapter meets monthly to discuss current issues surrounding public transportation and ways to promote its usage and lobby for improvements. The groups are dedicated to educating individuals, businesses and local organizations about the importance of public transportation. RTA is currently considering the creation of chapters in other cities.

# community involvement

*Faced with a growing number of passengers, RTA spent Fiscal Year 2005 developing and implementing new programs designed to boost customer satisfaction, maintain on-time performance and encourage more people to use public transportation. Passengers continued to benefit from buses equipped with security cameras, electronic fare boxes and automated stop-announcing systems.*

### **Systemwide Information Network Moves Closer to Reality**

The Agency awarded a \$3.4 million contract to Siemens VDO to create a system-wide information network that would allow passengers to get up-to-the-minute bus arrival and departure information. The long-awaited project includes automatic passenger counters on buses, as well as digital information signs at bus stop locations such as the Riverside downtown terminal, Moreno Valley Mall and Galleria at Tyler. Automatic vehicle location technology will also improve the tracking of vehicles by RTA dispatch.

### **Passengers Benefit from New Buddy Fare Program**

A new Dial-A-Ride program that offers reduced fares to passengers who ride together has seen a steady rise in popularity since its debut in April, 2005. The Buddy Fare program allows up to 10 people within a half-mile radius to book a Dial-A-Ride vehicle to the same location and be charged only a \$2.50 fare for the entire group. The program has not only saved RTA money by reducing trip costs, but it has also been popular among riders. A study of the program showed the number of passengers taking advantage of the program nearly doubled after only three months.

### **Promotional Fare Draws More Riders to CommuterLink Buses**

In hopes of attracting more riders to CommuterLink Route 202, RTA launched a major promotional campaign during Fiscal Year 2005 that enabled passengers to pay just \$2 roundtrip instead of \$8. The Agency's marketing effort for the Temecula to Oceanside route included newspaper advertising, direct mail, a seat drop, press releases and Web site promotions. The result was a boost in monthly riders from 460 riders before the promotion to 945 riders --- an increase of 106 percent. The promotional fare may be over, but the route continues to be popular among passengers who now pay just \$4.50 for the 74-mile round-trip.

### **Agency Buys Land for New Transit Center**

Plans to build a new transit center in Corona moved forward when RTA bought 2.1 acres of land near an existing Metrolink station. The center will be built off North Main Street, one block north of Highway 91, giving commuters easy access to trains and buses. The transit center will also serve as drop-off and pick-up point for transportation services such as Dial-A-Ride and the Corona Cruiser. The transit center is expected to include a covered plaza, park-and-ride area and possibly retail shops. The property is the first capital transportation project funded through the county's Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee (TUMF).

### **Temecula Residents Benefit from New Bus Shelters**

Thanks to a federal grant, RTA teamed up with the City of Temecula to build 15 new bus shelters in the city. The shelters will allow the City of Temecula and RTA to better serve passengers by offering protection from the outside elements. RTA currently serves Temecula with six routes, three of which are commuter routes.

### **Web Site Undergoes Facelift**

Just as Fiscal Year 2005 came to a close, RTA was hard at work on a new Internet site that would be faster, more user-friendly and fit passenger needs better than its predecessor. Listening to customer suggestions, the Agency upgraded its Web site, [www.RiversideTransit.com](http://www.RiversideTransit.com), with a fresh new look, easier-to-read sections, faster navigation and highlighted information that's most important to visitors. The new site has generated plenty of positive feedback with as many as 35,000 people visiting the site each month.



# boosting customer satisfaction

*The Riverside Transit Agency, Riverside County's multi-modal transportation provider, shall provide for a variety of transportation needs in a cost-effective and efficient manner, for all residents in our member communities. The Agency is committed to providing safe, reliable, courteous, accessible, and user-friendly transit services to our customers.*

#### RTA by the Numbers

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Number of Employees ..... | 363 |
| Coach Operators .....     | 223 |
| Mechanics .....           | 28  |

|                            |    |
|----------------------------|----|
| Bus Routes                 |    |
| Fixed Route Services ..... | 38 |
| Commuter Services .....    | 5  |
| Trolley Service .....      | 1  |

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Vehicles               |     |
| CNG Buses .....        | 114 |
| Dial-A-Ride Vans ..... | 56  |
| Fixed Route Vans ..... | 58  |
| Trolleys .....         | 6   |

|                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Area                              |       |
| Service Area - Square Miles ..... | 2,500 |

|                |        |
|----------------|--------|
| Bus Fares      |        |
| General .....  | \$1.25 |
| Youth .....    | \$1.25 |
| Senior .....   | 60¢    |
| Disabled ..... | 60¢    |

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Ridership              |             |
| Annual Boardings ..... | 7.4 Million |
| Daily Boardings .....  | 20,269      |

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Revenue Service Hours           |         |
| Fixed Route Service Hours ..... | 471,324 |
| Dial-A-Ride Service Hours ..... | 127,176 |

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Bus Mileage              |            |
| Annual Bus Millage ..... | 10 Million |

a variety of transportation needs



## RTA Revenue Budget and Expenses

Under budget and with an impressive financial rating, RTA continued to maintain fiscal stability. The Agency also posted positive results from an independent auditor, showing that RTA is making efficient use of its funds.

After a tough year of aggressive management and implementation of detailed cost-saving measures, RTA continued to maintain its solid financial rating with Dunn and Bradstreet.

*The majority of the Agency's operating budget came from Local Transportation Funds. RTA attained a farebox ratio of roughly 20 percent, exceeding its required minimum farebox ratio by two percentage points.*

*RTA's operating budget increased three percent between fiscal years 2004 and 2005. Nearly half of the Agency's \$38 million operating budget went to services, materials and supplies, and purchased transportation.*

RTA received glowing feedback from an independent auditor who concluded that the Agency is operating effectively and making efficient use of its funds. The audit, which covered RTA's activities during Fiscal Year 2005, concluded that there were no disagreements with management, no material errors, irregularities or possible illegal acts. The audit noted that RTA not only met, but exceeded the state's minimum farebox ratio. It also determined that RTA's accounting and financial reporting were accurate and followed proper procedures.

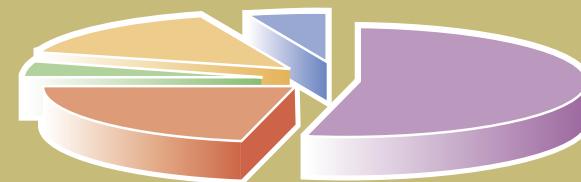
### Revenue Source | FY2005 Audited



|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Passenger Fares                         | \$6,004,812         |
| Local Transportation Fund/Other Income* | 25,057,063          |
| Federal Transportation Administration*  | 6,879,359           |
| Measure A                               | 624,378             |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>                   | <b>\$38,565,612</b> |

\* Operating Grants

### Operating Expenses | FY2005 Audited



|                                      |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Salaries & Benefits                  | \$18,741,060        |
| Purchased Transportation             | 11,869,940          |
| Services                             | 1,688,068           |
| Materials & Supplies                 | 3,441,227           |
| Other Expenses                       | 2,825,317           |
| <b>Sub Total Before Depreciation</b> | <b>\$38,565,612</b> |

## Award and Recognition

Award recognition is a great way for RTA to maintain its positive image in the community and demonstrate its ability to rise to the occasion. During Fiscal Year 2005, RTA was proud to be recognized for the following:

- 2005 Transportation Marketing and Communications Association's TRANNY Awards Award of Excellence for RTA's Student Transit Education Program
- Southern California Bus Rodeo First Place RTA Bus Operator Ron Dickey
- California Rideshare Week in the Inland Empire Plaque in appreciation of RTA sponsorship
- Riverside's 26th Annual Black History Parade and Expo Plaque in appreciation of RTA sponsorship
- United Way Plaque in recognition of RTA's TOP 20 Campaign
- California Association for Coordinated Transportation Plaque in appreciation of RTA hosting conference

## 2005 RTA Board of Directors

Jim Ayres, Chairman, City of San Jacinto

Jeff Fox, First vice chair, City of Beaumont

Frank Hall, Second vice chair, City of Norco

Robert Buster, County of Riverside, District 1

John F. Tavaglione, County of Riverside, District 2

Jeff Stone, County of Riverside, District 3

Marion Ashley, County of Riverside, District 5

Brenda Salas, City of Banning

Jon Winningham, City of Calimesa

Frank Kessler, City of Canyon Lake

Karen Spiegel, City of Corona

Roger Meadows, City of Hemet

Daryl Hickman, City of Lake Elsinore

Bonnie Flickinger, City of Moreno Valley

Doug McAllister, City of Murrieta

John Motte, City of Perris

Ameal Moore, City of Riverside

Jeff Comerchero, City of Temecula



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