

INSIGHTS

Metro Transit's weekly employee newsletter

October 23, 2020



A Route 18 bus travels southbound on Nicollet Avenue in south Minneapolis on Tuesday, Oct. 20, as snow fell across the region. Tuesday's storm brought up to 9 inches of snow to some parts of the region, making it the second-largest October snowfall in Minnesota history, after the 1991 Halloween Blizzard.

Council's annual Charitable Giving Campaign begins today

The annual Charitable Giving Campaign begins today and will continue through Friday, Nov. 6.

During the campaign, employees can sign up to have a portion of each paycheck directed to an eligible non-profit or make one-time contributions. Pledge forms will be accepted through Friday, Nov. 13, and can be found on MetNet; paper copies are available at work sites.

In 2019, Council employees pledged more than \$69,000 through the Charitable Giving Campaign.

Employees who want to learn more about this year's campaign can attend virtual kick-off meetings today, Oct. 23, at 10 a.m. or noon.

In addition, employees who are working on-site are invited to bring non-perishable food items to collection sites at their work location.

A one-day collection event will be held at the Metro Transit Police & Office Facility from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 31. In addition to non-perishable food items, staff may bring new winter clothing, toiletries and other household items to that event.

Items will be donated to Minneapolis-based Good in the Hood, St. Paul-based Keystone Community Services, and food shelves in Blaine, Anoka and Big Lake.

For more information about the campaign kick-off events and volunteering for the October 31 event, contact **Julie Obedoza**.

BRT investments recognize the value of transit

From General Manager Wes Kooistra

This has been one of the most challenging years in our organization's history. As I said in last week's column, the worsening pandemic and looming budget challenges mean our difficulties won't soon be behind us, either.



As hard as this year has been, though, it will also be remembered as a turning point in our region's commitment to fast, frequent transit.

This commitment is embodied in the advancement of the Green Line Extension, the recent recipient of federal grant funding, and in an historic agreement to close budget gaps for our next two Bus Rapid Transit lines, the METRO D Line and METRO B Line.

State funding approved by lawmakers last week means thousands of customers who ride our two busiest routes, routes 5 and 21, will soon enjoy faster service, better stations and modern buses. (The D Line will substantially replace Route 5 and the B Line will substantially replace Route 21.)

The importance of these investments has long been apparent. Around 1 in 4 households along the D Line and B Line do not have access to a vehicle. Around 40% of the nearly 130,000 people who can walk or roll to future station locations within 10 minutes qualify as low-income.

Today, these lines also have the potential to support recovery efforts along Lake Street, Chicago Avenue and in other areas that suffered widespread damage during this summer's civil unrest.

As we finalize our plans and look forward to starting D Line construction next spring, I want to thank Gov. Tim Walz for including this funding in his bonding proposal and the legislature for recognizing the value of these projects. And I also want to thank all the staff who have put so much work into these projects.

In particular, I'd like to thank our BRT Projects department and other Council

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staff who have spent years testifying at the Capitol, leading tours and collecting feedback from riders, residents and community leaders.

The coalition that emerged from this work was essential to securing funding and will continue to be important as we work to further build out our BRT network.

I also want to thank staff from across the organization who are already working to ensure the D Line and B Line become as successful as their predecessors. As we have seen from the A Line and C Line, these projects are true team efforts.

As past experience shows, these BRT lines will be key to rebuilding our ridership as we recover from the pandemic. When the D and B lines open in a few years, around 20% of our local bus ridership will occur on arterial BRT lines.

While these investments are encouraging, we must move forward with eyes wide open.

Our operating budget is in flux as tax and fare revenues suffer amid the pandemic. New stations, buses and fare equipment mean there will be more to maintain. And it remains hard to tell when those who are riding less or not at all will come back to transit.

We must accept and work through these challenges knowing the D Line and B Line will make real differences in the lives of our riders, and that transit is an essential part of addressing other important issues, like the climate crisis and inequality.

Thank you again to all those who are supporting this important work. I look forward to celebrating with you all on opening day.

Attend sessions on coping with COVID-19 pandemic

Several upcoming call-in sessions have been scheduled to help employees coping with the COVID-19 pandemic. The 90-minute sessions will be led by Sand Creek Counselor Brad McNaught. The schedule is as follows:

- Tuesday, Oct 27, 9 a.m., Living With Uncertainty
- Thursday, Nov. 5, 9 a.m., Processing Grief
- Monday, Nov. 16, 1 p.m., How to Stay Sane

If you did not receive an e-mail with access information, please contact fitforlife@metc.state.mn.us.

Employees can contact Sand Creek for free support any time by calling 1-888-243-5744 or by visiting sandcreekeap.com (use the company code metcouncil).

Mobile mammography truck visiting Heywood October 27

HealthPartners' mobile mammography truck will be at the Heywood Garage on Tuesday, Oct. 27, from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. All Council employees are invited to schedule an appointment for a free mammogram. Annual mammograms are the best way to detect breast cancer at an early and more curable stage. To schedule an appointment, call 952-993-3700.

Wolf, Address named transportation managers

Bus Transportation is welcoming two new transportation managers.

- **Bobby Address** is the new manager at the Heywood Garage, where he had been serving in an acting manager role.

Address began his career at Metro Transit 23 years ago as a Transit Information Center representative. He has also served as an assistant transportation manager and transit supervisor.



- **Amina Wolf** is the new manager at the Ruter Garage, where she had also been serving in an acting role. Wolf began her career at Metro Transit as a bus operator 14 years ago. She has also served as a train operator, rail supervisor and assistant transportation manager. Wolf is the current chair of Advancing Women in Transit, an Employee Resource Group.



Several assistant transportation manager positions will be filled soon.

Congratulations to these employees who retired in October

William Moss, Operator, East Metro, 5 years of service
Dwight Nelson, Operator, Heywood, 9 years of service
Ronald Klein, Operator, Heywood, 18 years of service
William McCoy, Operator, Heywood, 20 years of service
Gwendolyn McCall, Operator, Heywood, 26 years of service
Gwendolyn Wright, Operator, 40 years of service
Bob Boyle, Foreperson Electro Mechanical Technician, 44 years of service

Congratulations to these employees who celebrated their anniversaries in October

40 years

Charles Feucht, Mechanic Technician, East Metro
Dawn Hoffner, Program Tech Specialist
Christy Bailly, Director, Bus Transportation

25 years

William Carlstrom, Operator, South

20 years

Ed Petrie, Director, Finance
Jean O'Neill, Operator, Nicollet
Amy Ferman, Transit Supervisor
Daniel Tedford, Train Operator



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