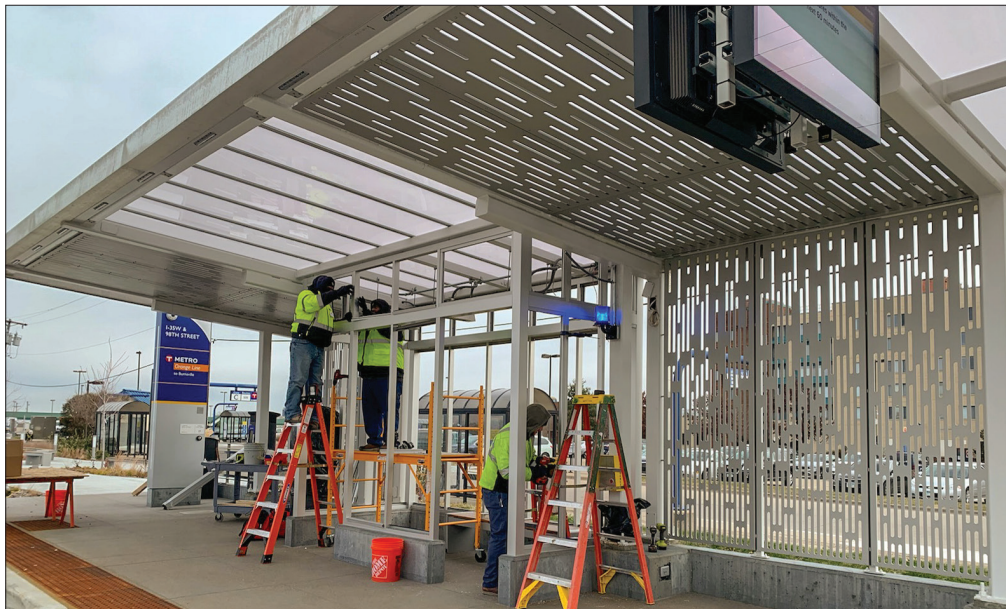


INSIGHTS

Metro Transit's weekly employee newsletter

December 3, 2021



Crews recently put the finishing touches on the METRO Orange Line's 98th Street & I-35W Station. Each new station features real-time signs, heat and light, ticket vending machines, security cameras and emergency call buttons.

What to know this week

CDC: All vaccinated adults should get a booster: Public health officials are stressing the importance of vaccinations and booster shots amid high case counts and the emergency of a new COVID-19 variant. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said this week that all vaccinated adults should get a booster. Initial and booster Pfizer vaccinations can be scheduled at either of the Council's Well@Work clinics on Mondays or Thursdays. Schedule an appointment online at healthpartners.com or call 952-967-5474 (St Paul) or 952-967-7468 (Heywood). To make an appointment at any other location, visit mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/connector.

Apply to become a train operator: Bus operators who are interested in transferring to light rail are invited to apply to become a train operator through Wednesday, Dec. 22. Operators who pass agility testing and an interview will go on an eligibility list according to seniority. Individuals on the eligibility list will be trained as positions open.

Learn more about the Zero Emission Bus Transition Plan: Operators are invited to learn more about the Zero Emission Bus Transition Plan at pop-up events that will be held next week at each garage. Staff and/or consultants working on the plan will be available according to the following schedule:

- Monday, Dec. 6: 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., Heywood; 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., Nicollet
- Wednesday, Dec. 8: 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., Ruter; 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m., South
- Friday, Dec. 10: 9 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., East Metro

Orange Line is another step to becoming stronger, better

From General Manager Wes Kooistra

Tomorrow's opening of the METRO Orange Line marks another important step forward in our effort to become a stronger, better service provider.



This new Bus Rapid Transit line will provide all-day, reliable service along one of our region's busiest roadways, I-35W, expanding access to jobs, housing, education, services, shopping and much more.

Importantly, the Orange Line doesn't just get people to and from downtown Minneapolis but serves several growing communities that are focusing development and other improvements around station areas.

I want to thank everyone who has helped bring us to this day and who will make this new service a success. We should be proud of what we've accomplished, and excited about what the Orange Line will do for our customers and the communities we serve.

As usual, this has been a true team effort.

Our BRT Projects Office has led the charge, championing the project from the earliest phases of its design to today. Our Engineering & Facilities Department has carefully guided construction activities, including the complex tasks of building a transitway beneath I-494 and a new two-level station at I-35W & Lake Street.

Service Development created plans to improve and add bus routes throughout the Orange Line corridor so people could reach employment centers and other destinations. Bus Maintenance has readied a fleet of new 60-foot BRT buses.

Revenue Operations procured and installed first-of-its-kind ticket vending machines at each new station. Marketing, Outreach and Transit Information have all had a hand in building the understanding of and excitement for this new service.

And, in recent months, transit supervisors, instructors and operators have

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learned and perfected the route so we can confidently welcome our first customers on board.

We've also had support from many partners, including the Minnesota Department of Transportation, corridor cities, Hennepin County, the Met Council, and the Federal Transit Administration.

This wide net is representative of what transit, at its best, is all about – working together to connect people to opportunity. Thank you for working together and with so many others to make this happen.

While this is a moment to celebrate, it is also a moment to reflect on how far we've come and where we're going to go from here.

With the Orange Line's opening, our METRO network now includes four BRT lines and two light rail lines, each providing the all-day service and high-quality stations our customers need and deserve.

Work to open at least eight more BRT lines and extend each of our light rail lines is well underway, too. Each of these new lines will strengthen and support our transit network, expand access to opportunity and make our region more sustainable, equitable and enjoyable.

So again, thank you for all you've done to make the Orange Line a reality. And thank you for persisting in bringing us closer to our vision for a stronger, better transit system.



Congratulations to...

- Ruter operators **Mike Pieri**, above left, center, and **Kham Moua**, above right, center, who were recently presented with their Superior Master and Prestige Master operator awards, respectively. Superior Master operators have achieved Outstanding Operator status 15 times, and Prestige Master operators have done so 10 times.
- Operators at Ruter Garage, who recently went nine consecutive days without a responsible collision, and seven consecutive days without a responsible collision soon after.
- Employees who have shared information about the Transit Assistance Program (TAP) at tabling events over the last year. Increased staff participation allowed more locations to be covered than any previous year, and led to more than 300 enrollments. Special thanks to **Jamie Holt**, mechanic technician, and **Tenille Warren**, TDM consultant, who worked more shifts than anyone else.
- Staff at Nicollet Garage, who donated more than 100 pounds of food to the Simpson Food Pantry in Minneapolis this week.

To extend recognition to a staff member or team, email insights@metrotransit.org.

Employee Resource Groups welcome new leadership

Two Employee Resource Groups are welcoming new leadership. The leaders will all serve two-years terms.

Ruby Daniels, an assistant transportation manager at Nicollet Garage, will serve as the chair for Advancing Women in Transit (AWT). Ruby began as a bus operator in 2010, and has also served as a transit supervisor and train operator.



Other position holders are:

- **Vice-chair:** Emily Bollensen, Bus Maintenance supervisor, Ruter
- **Coordinator:** Connie Mogielski-Isler, safety specialist, South
- **Special Events Coordinator:** Amanda Walker, assistant transportation manager, Nicollet

AWT provides a venue to discuss issues concerning female-identifying employees. The group hosts monthly discussions, guest speakers and other events. A complementary group, ConnectHER, hosts similarly themed meetings at alternate times to allow for additional participation.

Office holders for the Pride ERG, a group for LGBTQ+ staff and allies are:

- **Chair:** Nia Colebrooke, business systems analyst, Information Services
- **Vice-chair:** Ricki Vang, benefits administrator
- **Coordinator:** Marissa Higgins, operator, Heywood Garage

ERGs for employees who identify as having a disability or as Black Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC) are being organized. All ERGs are open to any employee, regardless of how they identify.

For more information about ERGs, email lila.eltawely@metc.state.mn.us.



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