

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE

2026

TEXAS TRANSIT

SUPPORTING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS



CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE:
THE TEXAS TRANSIT ASSOCIATION'S
LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIP,
AND PROGRESS

HONORING EXCELLENCE: CELEBRATING
TTA'S 2026 AWARD RECIPIENTS



MESSAGE FROM THE TTA BOARD PRESIDENT

As we enter 2026 and prepare to celebrate the Texas Transit Association's 40th anniversary, I am reminded of how far our industry has come—and how vital our work remains to the future of this State. Public transportation in Texas is experiencing one of the most challenging, yet promising, periods in its history. The growth, diversity, and needs of our communities are changing rapidly, and transit agencies across Texas are stepping up in remarkable ways.

From our large urban systems to our most rural providers, agencies are navigating workforce shortages, rising operating costs, aging fleets, and increasing demand for innovative mobility services. At the same time, Texas continues to experience record population growth, and more communities—large and small—are recognizing the essential role that public transit plays in connecting workers to jobs, seniors to care, veterans to services, and families to opportunity.

Despite these challenges, we are seeing incredible progress. Transit systems across Texas are expanding microtransit, investing in zero-emission fleets, deploying advanced technologies, and improving safety and customer experience. We're strengthening partnerships with local governments, regional planners, universities, health systems, and the private sector to design mobility networks that truly meet the needs of Texans.

I am proud that TTA continues to be a strong voice and a trusted partner during this time of change. Our advocacy remains focused on securing sustainable, long-term investment in public transportation at both the state and federal levels. We are also expanding

Serena Stevenson

General Manager
Waco Transit System

Transit Manager
MCRTD

Board President
Texas Transit Association



training and workforce development opportunities so agencies can recruit, retain, and support the next generation of transit professionals. And as always, TTA provides vital platforms for collaboration, problem-solving, and knowledge sharing.

In 2027, we will come together in Fort Worth for our Annual State Conference, Expo, and Rodeo—an event designed to energize, educate, and equip our members for the road ahead. Attendees can continue to expect dynamic keynote speakers, expanded breakout sessions focused on emerging technologies and operational excellence, one of the premier expos in the country showcasing the latest industry innovations, and of course, the always-inspiring Bus Rodeo celebrating the very best of our operators.

Thank you to our members—operators, maintenance staff, supervisors, agency leaders, Board members, partners, and advocates. Your dedication keeps Texas moving and keeps our communities strong. I am honored to serve as your Board President and excited for all that we will achieve together in the year ahead.

Here's to 40 years of progress—and to the bold future still ahead.



40 Years of Moving Texas Forward



“Public transportation in Texas has matured, innovated, and strengthened over the last 40 years.”

**Allen E. Hunter
Executive Director**

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF SERVICE



The Texas Transit Association’s Legacy of Leadership, Partnership, and Progress

For four decades, the Texas Transit Association (TTA) has stood as the unified voice of public transportation in Texas—advocating for its members, elevating professional standards, and strengthening mobility in communities large and small. Since its founding in 1986, TTA has witnessed—and helped guide—one of the most transformative eras in the history of public transit in our State.

From paper manifests and two-way radios to advanced fleet technology, electric vehicles, and data-driven operations, public transportation in Texas has evolved dramatically over the past 40 years. Through every change, every challenge, and every opportunity, TTA has remained constant in its mission: to support, connect, and advocate for the transit professionals who keep Texas moving.

As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, we reflect on a legacy built on leadership, partnership, and an unwavering commitment to service.

Witnessing 40 Years of Transformation in Texas Transit

When TTA was formed, Texas was a very different state. Its population was

smaller, its infrastructure less expansive, and public transportation systems were still developing in many regions. Over the decades, Texas has experienced extraordinary growth—becoming one of the fastest-growing states in the nation. With that growth came increasing demands for reliable, safe, and accessible public transportation.

TTA has witnessed:

- The expansion of metropolitan transit authorities in rapidly growing urban regions
- The strengthening of small urban systems serving mid-sized cities
- The critical role of rural transit providers connecting Texans to healthcare, employment, and essential services



- The emergence of technology-driven operations, including advanced scheduling systems, telematics, GPS tracking, and smart fare solutions
- The shift toward alternative fuels and cleaner fleets

Throughout these transitions, TTA has served as the connector—bringing agencies together to share best practices, solve problems collaboratively, and speak with a unified voice.

“Public transportation in Texas has matured, innovated, and strengthened over the last 40 years,” says Executive Director Allen E. Hunter. “TTA has been proud to stand alongside our members every step of the way—ensuring they have the tools, training, and advocacy needed to serve their communities.”

The Power of Partnership: TxDOT and TTA

No discussion of TTA’s success would be complete without recognizing the critical partnership

between TTA and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). This collaboration has been foundational to strengthening public transit across the state.

With the support of TxDOT, TTA launched a Statewide Training Initiative that has transformed professional development opportunities for transit agencies. This groundbreaking program brings high-quality, relevant training directly to agencies across Texas—at no cost to participants.

The impact has been profound.

From rural operators to metropolitan managers, thousands of transit professionals have benefited from training in:

- Leadership and management development
- Maintenance best practices
- Safety and compliance
- Procurement and regulatory guidance
- Customer service excellence
- Emerging technologies, and many other topics

By eliminating cost barriers and geographic limitations, this initiative has elevated standards statewide. It has strengthened agencies’ ability to meet federal and state requirements while improving day-to-day operations.

“Our partnership with TxDOT is essential,” Hunter notes. “Their support ensures that even the smallest systems have access to the same quality training and resources as larger agencies. That levels the playing field and strengthens transit across Texas.”

For many members, the statewide training initiative represents one of TTA’s most impactful achievements—demonstrating what can be accomplished when strong partnerships are built on trust and shared purpose.

Growing Together: State Conferences and Bus Rodeos

Over the years, TTA’s Annual State Conference, Expo, and Bus Rodeo has grown into one of the premier transit events in the nation. What began as a gathering

of dedicated professionals has evolved into a dynamic, multi-day experience that celebrates excellence, fosters innovation, and strengthens professional networks.

The Conference provides:

- Cutting-edge educational sessions
- Peer-to-peer learning opportunities
- Industry-leading exhibitors showcasing the latest technology and services
- Recognition programs honoring outstanding achievement

The Expo floor reflects the vitality of the industry—bringing together transit agencies and business partners in a collaborative environment that fuels innovation.

And then there is the Bus Roadeo—an event that captures the heart of public transit. Operators and Technicians from across Texas demonstrate their precision, professionalism, and commitment to safety in a spirited competition that celebrates the very people who serve passengers every day.

This strategic expansion has strengthened TTA's ability to:

- Monitor legislation impacting transit
- Educate lawmakers about the value of public transportation
- Advocate for sustainable and equitable funding
- Protect the interests of agencies of all sizes

Public transportation is essential to economic growth, workforce mobility, healthcare access, and quality of life. Ensuring that lawmakers understand this reality requires consistent engagement and informed advocacy.

“Having a strong presence at the Capitol ensures that transit agencies are not just part of the conversation—they are helping shape it,” says Hunter. “Our members deserve representation that understands their challenges and champions their successes.”

Texas Transit Association Celebrating 40 Years of Leadership, Service, and Moving Texas Forward

The Roadeo is more than a competition; it is a reminder that behind every route, every dispatch call, and every maintenance check, there is a dedicated professional ensuring Texans reach their destinations safely.

A Stronger Voice at the Capitol

As Texas has grown, so too has the importance of strong legislative advocacy. With the addition of TTA's lobbyist, Wade Long, the Association has established an even more significant and visible presence at the State Capitol.

With Wade Long's expertise and the unified support of TTA's membership, public transportation now has a more powerful voice in statewide policy discussions.

Leadership That Moves the Mission Forward

Behind TTA's continued success is a dedicated leadership team and an engaged Board of Directors representing metropolitan, urban, rural, and business members.

The TTA Board brings a comprehensive perspective to the Association's work—ensuring that every decision reflects the diverse needs of transit providers across Texas. Their commitment to collaboration and service has guided TTA through decades of growth and change.

At the helm, Executive Director Allen E. Hunter has led with vision, integrity, and a deep understanding of the transit landscape. His leadership has strengthened member engagement, expanded programming, and elevated TTA's profile statewide.

Equally essential to TTA's success is Laura Herrera, TTA's Administrative Assistant and Program Manager. Her organizational expertise, dedication, and steady leadership behind the scenes have been instrumental in the Association's growth.

From coordinating statewide training logistics to supporting conferences, managing communications, and ensuring seamless operations, Laura Herrera's impact is felt across every aspect of TTA's work.

Together, this leadership team—supported by an engaged Board and committed members—has positioned TTA for continued success.

Celebrating the People Who Keep Texas Moving

While TTA celebrates institutional milestones, its greatest strength has always been its people.

Operators navigating challenging routes. Dispatchers coordinating critical trips. Mechanics ensuring vehicles remain safe and reliable.

Mobility managers connecting vulnerable populations to essential services.

Administrators balancing compliance, budgets, and community needs.

Transit CEO's and Managers for providing the leadership, vision, and guidance.

For 40 years, TTA has amplified their stories, honored their achievements, and advocated for their success. Through awards, recognition programs, and professional development opportunities, TTA continues to celebrate the individuals who make public transportation possible.

A Bright Future Ahead

Public transportation faces real challenges: rapid population growth, evolving technology, funding pressures, workforce development needs, and environmental expectations. Yet the future has never looked more promising.

Innovation is accelerating. Collaboration is strengthening. Public awareness of transit's value is growing.

Texas continues to expand—and with it, the demand for efficient, accessible, and sustainable transportation options.

TTA stands ready for the next chapter.

“We are proud of our history,” Hunter reflects, “but we are even more excited about the future. Public transportation will play an increasingly vital role in Texas' continued growth, and TTA will be there—supporting our members every step of the way.”

40 Years Strong — and Just Getting Started

The 40th Anniversary of the Texas Transit Association is more than a celebration of longevity. It is a testament to the power of partnership, leadership, and shared purpose.

For four decades, TTA has united transit professionals, strengthened agencies, elevated standards, and championed mobility across the Lone Star State. Together with TxDOT, legislative partners, business members, and dedicated professionals, TTA has helped transform public transportation in Texas.

And the journey is far from over.

**Here's to 40 years of leadership.
40 years of innovation.
40 years of service.**

And to the many miles still ahead.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ADVANCING TRANSIT ACROSS THE LONE STAR STATE



The Texas Transit Association Board of Directors represents transit agencies and industry partners from across the state, working together to strengthen public transportation, advocate for funding, and serve Texas communities.



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Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA)
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TREASURER
Mario Delgado

Metro McAllen
Transit Director



VP OF METRO
Anthony DeKeyzer

Sun Metro
Director



VP OF URBAN
Robert Garza

El Metro Transit
General Manager



VP OF RURAL
Sarah Hidalgo-Cook

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General Manager



Lylene Springer

Panhandle Community Services
Transportation Director



Dottie Watkins

CapMetro
President & CEO



Norma Zamora

Transdev
Vice President



TxDOT congratulates the Texas Transit Association (TTA) on its 40th Anniversary and applauds its efforts to support public transportation and inform the people of Texas about critical issues affecting the public transit industry. In the same year of TTA's founding, the Texas Department of Highways and Public Transportation launched its iconic "Don't Mess with Texas" anti-littering campaign. Five years later in 1991, and amidst the Federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), the department was merged with the Department of Aviation and Motor Vehicles to form the current Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). Although the names may have changed, TxDOT and TTA have worked collaboratively over decades to champion public transit throughout our state and advocate the benefits it provides. The department looks forward to a continued partnership in advancing public transportation, TTA looks good at 40!

As we celebrate these milestones and collaborative accomplishments, it's important to recognize how Texas's evolving landscape is shaping the future direction of transit across the state.

Every year, Texas transit systems deliver nearly 230 million trips, linking communities across the state. These connections are more than just travel—they're lifelines to jobs, healthcare, recreation, education, and other essential services. Whether you're commuting to work, heading to a doctor's appointment, or exploring new opportunities, transit is the thread that ties

CHARTING THE FUTURE OF TRANSIT IN TEXAS

Texans together. By providing safe, reliable, and affordable transportation, transit not only meets the mobility needs of individuals but also fuels economic growth and connects businesses to a diverse workforce.

As the state experiences unprecedented growth, the demand for flexible and robust transportation options grows. The Texas Demographic Center projects a 40% growth in population and a 33% jump in employment between 2020 and 2050, with most growth centered in the bustling Texas Triangle—Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, Austin, and San Antonio. To keep pace, the Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan (SMTP) sets out a vision for how transit can support this growth, foster economic opportunity, and ensure that all Texans have access to vital services.

Imagine a Texas where safe, accessible, and integrated transit options connect every corner of the state—locally and regionally.

Transit not only meets the mobility needs of individuals but also fuels economic growth.

That's the vision: a seamless network supporting quality of life, economic resilience, and vibrant communities. Building the future of transit means listening to the people who rely on it. From 2023 to 2025, the SMTP engaged in three rounds of public outreach, meeting Texans where they are—at libraries, community centers, fairs, festivals, farmers markets, and athletic events. The numbers tell the story: over 100,000 interactions, 200,000 social media views, and more than 4,000 surveys completed.

Feedback from stakeholders revealed several clear priorities. Texans are calling for expanded service hours, more convenient locations, and stronger connections between cities and towns. Riders and agencies alike see the need for better vehicles and more comfortable, modern waiting areas. However, challenges remain, particularly around navigating complex funding streams, upgrading facilities, and attracting and retaining a skilled workforce.

To address these priorities, the Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan is structured around four thematic pillars. The first focuses on urban and rural transit services, recognizing the distinct opportunities and challenges in each setting. The second pillar aims to enhance intercity connectivity, ensuring that cities, towns, and rural areas are linked seamlessly. Planning and design form the third pillar, with an emphasis on developing adaptable, forward-thinking guidelines. The final pillar explores innovative approaches to funding, with the goal of streamlining processes and sustaining services for the long term.

Turning vision into action, the plan outlines several key steps. These include establishing a Community of Practice to address the specific challenges of small urban and rural transit, developing a comprehensive statewide transit network and hub framework, and creating flexible planning and design guidelines in collaboration with stakeholders.

Other initiatives involve improving data collection and reporting, seeking greater flexibility and innovation in funding, and formalizing ongoing outreach and educational efforts to spotlight the benefits of transit for communities across Texas.

In public transit, the road ahead is clear: invest, innovate, and involve communities to ensure that transit continues to be a powerful force for connection and growth. With the Statewide Multimodal Transit Plan as a guide, Texas is poised to keep moving—all together.

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TEXAS TRANSIT AWARDS



Rising Star Award

Jackeline Santamaria City of South Padre Island Island Metro

Jackeline Santamaria, Transit Coordinator at Island Metro, exemplifies the promise and innovation of the next generation of transit leaders. Being under the age of 30, she has demonstrated exceptional leadership, initiative, and a commitment to advancing equitable and accessible public transportation for residents, workers, and visitors.

Jackeline recently led the addition and replacement of 19 bus shelters across Island Metro routes, ensuring safety, accessibility, and FTA environmental compliance. She also played a pivotal role in securing a partnership with Tesla to install 16 Superchargers at the Island Metro Park & Ride facility, integrating clean energy into public transit and supporting regional economic development.

In her daily role, Jackeline coordinates projects, supports funding efforts, improves internal processes, enhances customer service, and strengthens staff development. Her professionalism, innovation, and dedication to the community reflect a bright future in public transportation and make her highly deserving of the TTA Rising Star Award.



Outstanding Customer Service

Pamela Hernandez REAL Transportation

Pamela Hernandez exemplifies dedication, professionalism, and compassion in public transportation, making her an invaluable asset to REAL Transportation. As Mobility and Emergency Management Coordinator, she has expanded service hours across nine counties, supported the launch of three microtransit zones, and advanced safety for riders and staff, strengthening mobility for rural communities.

Pamela consistently goes above and beyond in serving the public. She provides patient, solution-focused support, ensuring riders feel heard, respected, and valued. Her expertise in trip planning, scheduling, and coordination with drivers ensures services run safely and efficiently, while her problem-solving skills address unexpected challenges with grace and effectiveness.

Beyond operational duties, Pamela contributes to public outreach, staff training, and service improvements, helping the agency better meet community needs. Her reliability, leadership, and unwavering commitment to customer service make Pamela Hernandez a model for excellence in rural public transportation and a deserving candidate for recognition.



Outstanding Staff Member

Christy Fowler East Texas Council of Governments GoBus Transit

Christy Fowler is highly deserving of recognition for her exceptional service and steadfast support of public transportation programs. With more than 20 years at the East Texas Council of Governments and joining the Transportation Department in 2022, Christy immediately strengthened the team through her deep institutional knowledge, financial expertise, and commitment to accountability.

She manages complex responsibilities related to grants, budgeting, compliance, reporting, and audits with precision and reliability in a fast-paced environment. Her attention to detail and understanding of funding requirements ensure transit programs remain fiscally sound and operationally strong.

What truly sets Christy apart is her service-oriented mindset. She consistently goes beyond her assigned role to meet deadlines, solve problems, and support colleagues. In addition to supporting regional transit operations, she contributes her time and expertise to statewide transit initiatives and industry events.

Christy's professionalism, initiative, and unwavering dedication make her an invaluable asset and a clear choice for Outstanding Staff Member of the Year.



Outstanding Public Transportation Coordinator

Eric Garcia Lubbock

Eric Garcia serves as a District Public Transportation Coordinator with the Texas Department of Transportation, where he provides critical guidance and oversight to public transit agencies throughout his district. Throughout his career, Eric has demonstrated a strong commitment to advancing safe, efficient, and customer-focused transportation services.

Known for his professionalism, responsiveness, and collaborative approach, Eric works closely with local transit providers to ensure compliance, strengthen operations, and improve service delivery. He is highly knowledgeable in state and federal transit requirements and consistently shares his expertise to help agencies navigate funding, reporting, and program implementation successfully.

Eric's contributions extend beyond technical assistance. He fosters strong partnerships, supports innovative solutions, and promotes mobility options that enhance economic development and community access. His friendly demeanor, reliability, and willingness to assist make him a trusted resource among transit professionals.

Through his leadership and dedication, Eric Garcia has made meaningful contributions to public transportation within his district and across Texas, making him highly deserving of this recognition.



TTA is proud to recognize Joe Saldaña for the Outstanding Associate Member for his exceptional dedication, technical expertise, and unwavering support of Texas public transportation. With more than 20 years in the industry, Joe has become a trusted partner to rural, small urban, and large urban transit agencies, helping them improve safety, reliability, and fleet performance.

At GILLIG, Joe provides hands-on guidance to maintenance teams, operations staff, and agency leadership, assisting with fleet modernization, lifecycle planning, and troubleshooting. He plays a critical role in TTA events, including the annual Roadeo, ensuring maintenance tests run smoothly, and supports conferences and expos statewide.

Joe's contributions advance public transit through cleaner vehicle technologies, improved maintenance readiness, enhanced safety, and reliable fleet performance. Agencies consistently rely on his practical solutions, quick response to emergencies, and commitment to workforce training. His professionalism, integrity, and long-term dedication make him an invaluable partner and a standout leader in Texas transit.

Outstanding Associate Member

Joe Saldaña
Gillig

TTA is proud to recognize Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority for the Outstanding Safety & Security Award for its Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative. This program demonstrates CCRTA's commitment to protecting passengers, employees, and the public through education, outreach, and collaboration.

Recognizing that transit systems play a key role in identifying and preventing trafficking, CCRTA implemented a system-wide approach combining training, awareness campaigns, and partnerships. A central element is the annual Human Trafficking Awareness Summit, bringing together transit professionals, law enforcement, social service agencies, and community partners to share best practices and strengthen regional coordination.

CCRTA also deploys extensive messaging across buses, stations, and digital platforms to educate riders, while providing comprehensive training for staff at all levels to recognize and respond to warning signs.

By embedding awareness into daily operations, outreach, and partnerships, CCRTA enhances safety, strengthens community collaboration, and serves as a model for proactive, transit-based human trafficking prevention.



Outstanding Safety and Security Award

Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority

2026 TEXAS TRANSIT AWARDS

Transit Innovation Award

Harris County Rides Program
Harris County Transit



The Harris County Rides program provides coordinated, subsidized transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities across 1,772 square miles of Harris County, filling gaps where Metro or MetroLift services are unavailable. Established in 2003, Rides has earned local and national recognition for service coordination and innovation.

In 2011, Rides became the first program in the Houston region to implement an electronic fare card, enabling regional coordination through Interlocal agreements with Gulf Coast Transit District, Galveston Island Transit ADA services, and Montgomery County Meals on Wheels. The system tracks client demographics, trip data, and agency usage, allowing efficient reporting and analysis.

Rides collaborates with over 40 health and human service agencies and coordinates shared-ride and taxi services without owning vehicles. In 2025, Rides became the second U.S. program to partner with Uber Technologies, integrating same-day service into its electronic fare system. This innovation expands capacity, flexibility, and 24/7 transportation options for residents countywide.

Ann Zadeh is a passionate advocate for public transportation and a dedicated supporter of Trinity Metro. With a career spanning urban planning, service on the Fort Worth City Council, and her current role as Executive Director of Community Design Fort Worth, Ann has consistently championed transit as a tool for vibrant, connected, and equitable communities.

On City Council, she prioritized solutions that moved beyond car-centric planning, advancing initiatives to expand Fort Worth's transit network and secure funding to strengthen Trinity Metro services. In 2017, she helped launch the Tarrant Transit Alliance, now integrated into Community Design Fort Worth, hosting meetups, transit tours, and educational programs to build public understanding and support for transit.

Ann leads by example as a regular rider of buses, trains, and on-demand services, inspiring others to embrace public transportation. Her dedication, visibility, and advocacy make her a cornerstone of transit advancement in Fort Worth.

Friend of Transit Award

Ann Zadeh
Community Design Fort Worth



Outstanding Rural Transit System

Island Metro
South Padre Island

Island Metro exemplifies innovation and excellence in rural public transportation, providing safe, fare-free service connecting residents, workers, students, and visitors throughout South Padre Island, Port Isabel, and surrounding communities.

Through a strategic partnership with Tesla, Island Metro installed 16 universal Superchargers at its Park & Ride facility, creating a multimodal hub that reduces congestion and supports workforce access to hotels, restaurants, local businesses, SpaceX, and other key employers.

The agency operates a free, ADA-accessible deviated fixed-route system with extended service hours, ensuring equitable access to beaches, medical care, retail, and community destinations. Seventeen new bus shelters further enhance safety and rider comfort.

With strong regional coordination, efficient use of Section 5311 funding, and forward-thinking infrastructure improvements, Island Metro maximizes impact while maintaining sustainable operations—making it a model of excellence in rural transit.



Outstanding Urban Transit System

Citibus
Lubbock

Celebrating 50 years of service, Citibus has been a trusted lifeline for the Lubbock community since 1975. Through strong partnerships with the City of Lubbock and Texas Tech University, Citibus connects residents to jobs, education, healthcare, and community life with safe, reliable, and accessible transportation.

From supporting daily commuters and students to providing critical access to medical care, Citibus strengthens families and neighborhoods across West Texas. Signature services like the Park-N-Ride Gameday Express, First Friday Art Trail trolley, and free rides on Election Day and New Year's Eve reflect the agency's deep commitment to public service and civic engagement.

Guided by strong leadership and a dedicated team, Citibus continues to innovate while prioritizing safety, reliability, and equity. For five decades of faithful service and meaningful community impact, Citibus exemplifies excellence in urban transit and proudly supports the mission of the Texas Transit Association.



Outstanding Metropolitan Transit System

Trinity Metro

Trinity Metro is proud to serve the residents of Fort Worth and the surrounding region with safe, reliable, and innovative public transportation services. As a recognized Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) within the Texas Transit Association, Trinity Metro continues to set the standard for excellence in metropolitan transit.

Through a seamless multimodal network—including bus service, TEXRail, Trinity Railway Express, and ZIPZONE on-demand rides—Trinity Metro expands access to jobs, education, healthcare, and entertainment while supporting regional economic growth and sustainability.

With a strong focus on customer service, community engagement, safety, and innovation, Trinity Metro's dedicated team works every day to enhance mobility and improve quality of life across the region.

For its leadership, collaboration, and commitment to excellence, Trinity Metro exemplifies the mission and values of the Texas Transit Association.



Outstanding Public Transportation General Manager

Anthony DeKeyzer
Sun Metro

Anthony DeKeyzer, Director of Sun Metro, exemplifies transformational leadership, resilience, and innovation in public transportation. Leading more than 600 employees who provide 5.6 million miles of service annually across El Paso, he continues to position Sun Metro as one of Texas' most progressive transit systems.

In February 2025, a fire destroyed the agency's primary maintenance facility. Under Anthony's leadership, nearly full service was restored within 10 days through rapid emergency coordination, temporary maintenance operations, and a strategic rebuild plan.

Operationally, Sun Metro achieved 91% On-Time Performance while maintaining ridership growth. Financially, he sustained flat budgets despite inflation, reduced overtime costs, strengthened reserves, and advanced \$64 million in fleet investments. His modernization efforts include 72 new CNG buses, 45 electric paratransit vehicles, and expanded EV infrastructure.

Through visionary initiatives and steady crisis leadership, Anthony DeKeyzer remains highly deserving of the 2025 Outstanding Public Transportation General Manager Award.



Public Transit Legacy Award

Donna Roberts

TTA is proud to recognize Donna Roberts, at the Texas Department of Transportation, for the Public Transit Legacy Award, celebrating her remarkable career, unwavering dedication, and enduring impact on public transportation across Texas.

Throughout her decades of service, Donna has been a steadfast advocate for transit agencies of all sizes—urban, small urban, and rural—helping communities deliver safe, reliable, and accessible transportation to millions of Texans. In her role, she has consistently provided knowledgeable, solutions-focused leadership, guiding agencies through complex challenges, regulatory changes, and periods of growth. Her deep expertise in transit policy, program administration, and funding has strengthened agencies' operational performance and ensured the efficient use of state and federal resources, directly improving mobility for seniors, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and essential workers.

Donna's influence extends beyond technical expertise. She is widely respected for her collaborative approach, building strong partnerships between TxDOT, the Texas Transit Association, local transit providers, and community stakeholders. Her accessibility, professionalism, and thoughtful guidance have made her a trusted advisor to transit leaders statewide, empowering agencies to innovate and expand services.



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Throughout her career, Donna has championed innovation, workforce development, and continuous improvement. She has led initiatives that promote training, policy advancement, and operational excellence, ensuring transit agencies can respond effectively to funding challenges, evolving mobility demands, and community needs—all while keeping riders' safety, accessibility, and quality of service at the forefront.

Donna's career embodies the values celebrated by the Public Transit Legacy Award: vision, integrity, service, and lasting impact. Her work has shaped the trajectory of public transportation in Texas, leaving a legacy that will benefit transit agencies, communities, and riders for generations to come. TTA is proud to recognize Donna Roberts for her exceptional contributions and enduring influence on the state's public transportation industry.

TEXAS TRANSIT AWARDS



Distinguished Service Award

Omega Hawkins

Omega Hawkins dedicated over four decades to advancing public transit in Texas, leaving a lasting legacy of mobility, accessibility, and community service. She is the visionary behind STAR Transit, now the fourth-largest transit agency in North Central Texas and the largest in the region operating without sales-tax funding.

Hawkins began her career in 1974 as a bus driver for the Dallas County Nutrition Program. In 1979, she founded the Seagoville Senior Citizens Assistance and Transportation Program, which expanded into Kaufman County Senior Citizens Services, KART, and ultimately STAR Transit. Under her leadership, daily meal delivery grew from 40 to over 500, and the agency now provides more than 215,000 rides annually across multiple counties, including fixed-route and demand-response services.

Her vision, resilience, and strategic leadership secured critical state and federal funding, ensuring the agency's sustainability. Hawkins' work transformed public transit in North Central Texas, improving the quality of life for thousands and earning her numerous accolades, including the Lone Star Award.

John Wilson devoted over four decades to public transportation, leaving a profound and lasting impact on the transit industry in Texas and beyond. His career reflects an unwavering commitment to improving mobility, serving employees, passengers, and the citizens of Lubbock with dedication, integrity, and vision.

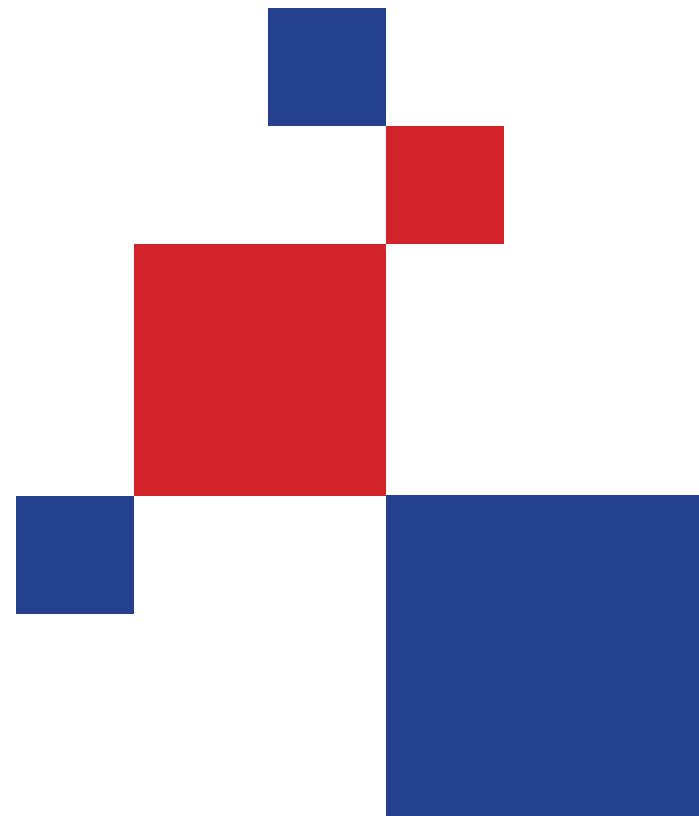
John began his career in 1976 as a Transit Coordinator for the City of Lubbock. Seven years later, he became the first and longest-serving General Manager of Citibus, a position he held from 1983 to 2012. During his 29-year tenure, he

LIFETIME

transformed Citibus into a model of excellence in operations, safety, and service delivery. His leadership ensured that residents had reliable access to employment, education, healthcare, and community resources, strengthening the quality of life across Lubbock.

A key achievement of John's career was his instrumental role in advancing state operating assistance for medium-sized transit systems in 1989, providing critical financial support to systems like Citibus. He also contributed to the development of the Federal Surface Transportation Act of 1991, helping to shape national transit policy. Under his guidance, Citibus earned the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Public Transportation System Outstanding Achievement Award in 1992, a testament to his strategic vision and operational excellence.

John was equally dedicated to workforce development. He founded the innovative management program known as "John Wilson University," mentoring at least sixteen future transit general managers who have gone on to lead agencies throughout Texas and across the United States. This program emphasized practical skills, leadership development, and professional growth, ensuring a lasting legacy of capable transit leaders in the industry.



JOHN
WILSON



ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Beyond his work at Citibus, John actively contributed to the broader public transportation community. He served on numerous boards and committees, including the APTA Board of Directors, APTA Small Operations and Legislative Steering Committees, the Texas Department of Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) as Vice President, and held multiple leadership positions with the Texas Transit Association, including President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Board Member. His guidance, experience, and advocacy influenced transit policy and supported the growth and professionalism of public transportation across the state.

John's achievements earned him wide recognition, including the Friend of Texas Transit Award and multiple APTA National Silver Safety Awards in 1988, 1990, and 1996, highlighting his commitment to safety, operational excellence, and public service.

Through his vision, mentorship, and steadfast dedication, John Wilson set a standard of excellence in public transit. His legacy is evident not only in the systems he strengthened but in the countless professionals he inspired. John's lifetime of service reflects the values of leadership, innovation, and commitment that define the public transportation industry.

He is a true pioneer whose contributions continue to improve transit services and enrich communities, making him an exemplary choice for the Lifetime Achievement Award.

A City on the Rise. A System to Match. Inside El Paso's Next Generation of Transit

El Paso is a vibrant and dynamic border community, recently ranked among the best places to live for 2025–26 by U.S. News & World Report. As the city continues to grow, so too must the system that moves it. Public transportation is more than buses and routes—it is access to opportunity. It connects people to jobs, education, healthcare, and everyday life. For decades, Sun Metro has served as that essential connector for this bicultural community along the U.S.–Mexico border. Now, the agency is entering a new era with the launch of Sun Metro Rising, the introduction of its first electric LIFT fleet, and the pilot of Microtransit in East El Paso—the fastest-growing region in the city.

Together, these initiatives represent more than system upgrades. They signal a strategic transformation designed to reflect how El Paso moves today—and how it will move in the years ahead. The goal is clear: to build a transit system centered on people, built for growth, and ready to move El Paso forward.

Sun Metro Rising: Built for a Changing City El Paso today looks very different than it did a decade ago. Growth on the far Eastside,

continued expansion in the Northeast, and new commercial development have reshaped travel patterns across the city.

In response, Sun Metro launched a comprehensive network redesign in 2023, grounded in data, ridership trends, and community input. The agency evaluated how people move today and identified the need for a new service baseline—one aligned with current demand and flexible enough to support future growth.

That work comes to life this summer with the launch of Sun Metro Rising. The redesign introduces updated routes, improved stop locations, and service adjustments tailored to modern travel patterns.

“Sun Metro is a dynamic organization with a people-centric culture focused on enhancing the customer experience,” said Director Anthony DeKeyser. “With Sun Metro Rising, riders can expect routes designed around current demand, updated stops, and the addition of Microtransit—an on-demand service that better reflects how our community moves.”

Leading up to implementation, Sun Metro has prioritized proactive outreach and customer support to ensure riders are informed and prepared. The result is a system that is faster, more connected, and better aligned with El Paso's future.

Clean Mobility: Advancing with an Electric Fleet

Modern transit is not only about where service goes—it is also about how it operates. Sun Metro has long been a leader in sustainability, previously becoming the first public transit system in the nation to transition fully to compressed natural gas. Now, it is taking the next step.



Sun Metro Rising, launching Summer 2026, will deliver systemwide route updates and introduce Microtransit, an on-demand mobility service.

Through an \$11 million investment funded by the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emission Grant Program, Sun Metro is introducing 45 fully electric Ford E-Transit vans and 25 charging stations, transitioning the LIFT paratransit fleet into a new era of clean mobility.

LIFT provides curb-to-curb service for ADA paratransit-eligible riders—individuals whose transportation needs require additional accessibility. This investment reinforces a core principle: all riders deserve safe, reliable, and dignified transportation.

The new electric vehicles feature ADA-accessible design elements, including wide-entry sliding doors, wheelchair lifts, and secure restraint systems. In addition, upgraded scheduling software will streamline booking and improve on-time performance, delivering a more reliable and comfortable experience.

Each month, LIFT provides an average of more than 18,000 rides—a number that continues to grow. By prioritizing sustainability, accessibility, and service quality, Sun Metro is building a fleet designed to serve every rider with care.

Microtransit: Smarter Service for Growing Areas As El Paso expands, not every neighborhood fits within a traditional fixed-route system. While BRIO and fixed-route buses remain the backbone of the network, evolving travel patterns require more flexible solutions.

In the Upper Eastside, where development has surged but density remains lower, fixed-route service proved less efficient. Rather than reduce service, Sun Metro chose to innovate.

This summer, the agency will launch a Microtransit pilot program in Upper East El Paso. This on-demand, zone-based service allows riders to request trips through the RIDE Sun Metro app or by phone. It connects riders to key destinations within the zone and to the Upper East Side Transfer Station, where they can access the broader network.

Microtransit aligns service with real-time demand, improving access while using public resources more efficiently. If successful, it could serve as a model for future service innovations across the city.

A System That Grows Without Forgetting Its Purpose Even as Sun Metro evolves, its commitment to community remains strong. New initiatives signal the future, while longstanding programs continue to serve residents every day.

Through its Veterans Ride Free Program, Sun Metro provides no-cost transit to veterans and their families, supporting more than one million rides annually. This program reflects a deep commitment to honoring those who served.

Meanwhile, the historic Streetcar continues to operate fare-free in Downtown and Uptown El Paso. With special events and weekend programming, ridership has grown more than 200 percent over the past three years. The Streetcar has become more than transportation—it is a shared community experience connecting people to the heart of the city.

Together, these efforts reinforce a simple truth: modernization does not replace service—it strengthens it. As El Paso rises, Sun Metro rises with it—committed to serving every neighborhood, every rider, and every generation to come.



Since its initial launch in 2013, Sun Metro's BRIO Bus Rapid Transit system has served as the foundation of public transportation in El Paso, providing high-capacity, limited-stop service along key corridors.



Sun Metro's new electric vehicle delivers accessible, comfortable, and dependable service throughout the community, and is designed to support ADA paratransit-eligible customers.



Operated by Sun Metro, the El Paso Streetcar blends transportation and entertainment, creating shared experiences that connect residents and visitors beyond the traditional commute.

FORTY YEARS MOVING RURAL COMMUNITIES FORWARD

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF RURAL MOBILITY ACROSS THE COASTAL BEND



The Heart of REAL Transit

For over five decades, the story of REAL Transit has been defined by a singular, unwavering Goal: to ensure a dignified quality of life for the rural communities of South Texas. What began in the 1970s as a modest community effort has grown into a resilient mobility network that mirrors the enduring spirit of the South Texas communities we are privileged to serve. We believe that no one should be left without access to opportunity because of where they live.

We recognize how truly blessed we are to steward a system that serves as more than just transportation. Our Vision is to honor the worth and dignity of all people through safe, caring, and community-centered services. This journey reflects the resilience of the Coastal Bend—a story of steadily growing, adapting, and building a stronger rural future together.

Creating a Solid Foundation

Our mission has always been supported by the best tools available for the time. For decades, our service relied on the simple, effective coordination of two-way radio communication to bridge the distances of the Coastal Bend. This era of manual coordination was the heartbeat of our early growth, proving that a dedicated team could move mountains with a shared frequency and a commitment to our neighbors.

As the region grew, so did our responsibility to stay current for the sake of those we serve. Since 2014, we have navigated a thoughtful transition to integrate modern GPS tracking, on-board cameras, and Wi-Fi. By moving toward a centralized dispatch system and professional safety training, we haven't replaced our original values; we have simply given them a more robust platform to ensure no rural resident is left behind. Today, we offer a world-class system that remains, at its heart, a simple neighborly service.

A Generational Investment

As we look toward 2027, the next chapter in our evolution is already rising. The upcoming Regional Multimodal Transit Facility represents a **once-in-a-generation, multi-million dollar investment** in the future of rural infrastructure.

More than a building, this facility is a long-term commitment to centralized operations and regional resilience. It stands as a symbol of how far we have come—and how much more lies ahead. The true measure of our work isn't found in miles traveled, but in the worker reaching a new job and the senior staying connected to their community. We remain profoundly grateful for the opportunity to expand this bridge between isolation and possibility for generations to come.

REAL Transit Milestones

1972 - Foundations of Service

A community-based organization is established with a mission to serve rural residents. With limited resources but a strong commitment, the foundation is laid to address unmet needs across the region.

1980s - Launching Mobility

Transportation services launch in response to growing challenges in underserved areas. What begins as a small initiative quickly becomes an essential lifeline for healthcare, employment, and core services.

1997 - Designated RTD

Authorized by Texas state statute, the program becomes a designated Rural Transit District. REAL Transit emerges from this designation, forming a structured regional system.

Late 90s - 2013 - Expansion

Service expands beyond the original footprint to four counties, strengthening mobility throughout the Rural Coastal Bend and connecting more communities to essential destinations.

2014 - 2020 Modernization & Growth

Centralized operations, modern technologies, and enhanced safety practices are integrated, improving reliability and efficiency across an expanded service region of nine counties.

2020s Strengthening Infrastructure

Ongoing investment in infrastructure and operational capacity equips REAL Transit to meet evolving needs through a central regional headquarters and four strategic Transit Depots.

2027 — The Next Chapter

Completion of the Regional Multimodal Facility. Representing a once-in-a-generation, multi-million dollar investment in rural infrastructure, this landmark project serves as the future headquarters for Regional Administration, Operations, and Maintenance.



SMALL BUS, BIG IMPACT: THE NEXT CHAPTER FOR FORT BEND TRANSIT

Early on a weekday morning in Fort Bend County, a small bus leaves the Fort Bend Transit facility and heads to its first stop. It might be a suburban home, an apartment complex, or a farmhouse. The driver welcomes a rider aboard and continues on—connecting them to work, a doctor's appointment, school, or adult daycare. Moments like these capture the everyday impact of Fort Bend Transit (FBT), a system built on the belief that mobility strengthens communities.

FBT began in 2005 when the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court established the Public Transportation Department to connect urban and rural areas, access transit funding, and deliver service without increasing the tax burden. Twenty years later, it has evolved into Fort Bend Transit, guided by its mission of Connecting Communities with a Smarter Way to Travel and a vision to be an exceptional transit agency for residents and visitors alike.

Today, FBT operates from Rosenberg, centrally located within the county, and provides both Demand Response and Commuter Park and Ride services. Demand Response offers curb-to-curb, shared rides scheduled in advance, ensuring access for seniors, individuals with disabilities, and residents without personal vehicles. Commuter services link riders to major employment centers, including the Texas Medical Center, Downtown Houston, Greenway Plaza, and the Energy Corridor. In 2025 alone, FBT provided

more than 125,000 demand response trips and over 291,000 commuter trips.

Building on two decades of service, FBT has been awarded \$13.7 million in federal funding as part of its "Better Buses, Brighter Futures" initiative—a \$15.7 million total investment and one of the most significant in the agency's history.

This initiative will fund three key improvements: construction of a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling station, upgrades to the maintenance facility to support clean-fuel operations and safety systems, and replacement of 13 aging vehicles alongside the addition of 11 new CNG buses.

These upgrades address critical needs. Aging vehicles face rising maintenance costs, declining reliability, and higher emissions. Transitioning to low-emission CNG buses will improve efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and support long-term sustainability goals.

Facility improvements will enhance operations through upgraded ventilation, gas detection systems, and modern safety infrastructure—reducing downtime and preparing FBT for future growth.

Behind every ride are FBT's core values: integrity, reliability, safety, communication, and respect. With continued investment and a strong commitment to service, Fort Bend Transit is moving the county forward—one ride at a time.



SWART: FOUR DECADES OF COMMITMENT, INNOVATION, AND MOBILITY IN SOUTHWEST TEXAS

Celebrating 40 Years of the Texas Transit Association

As the Texas Transit Association marks 40 years of leadership in public transportation, it also celebrates the agencies that bring that mission to life. In Southwest Texas—where long distances, rural landscapes, and tight-knit communities define daily life—the Southwest Area Regional Transit District (SWART) stands as a strong example of how transit expands opportunity, strengthens economies, and transforms lives.

SWART's journey began in 1981, when the system—then known as Southwest Transit—launched service with just five station wagons across three counties. From those modest beginnings, SWART laid the foundation for what would become one of the most respected rural transit systems in Texas.

From Regional Program to Independent Transit District

For decades, SWART operated within a community action framework, connecting residents to employment, medical care, education, and essential services. In June 2012, the agency transitioned into a stand-alone transit district, strengthening governance, increasing flexibility, and positioning SWART for long-term growth.

Today, SWART serves eight counties: Dimmit, Edwards, Kinney, La Salle, Maverick, Real, Uvalde, and Zavala. Eagle Pass remains the region's only urbanized area, requiring SWART to balance both rural and urban service models within one system.

Growing to Meet Regional Needs

From five vehicles in 1981, SWART has grown into a system traveling more than 900,000 miles annually and providing over 100,000 passenger trips each year. These include local trips and long-distance connections to regional hubs for healthcare, employment, education, and government services.



Services include rural demand-response transportation, ADA paratransit in Eagle Pass, Arriba SWART on-demand service, intercity routes, medical transportation, SWARTworks vanpool services, and mobility management through the Southwest Initiative for Mobility (SWIM). Each service is designed with one goal: ensuring mobility is never a barrier to opportunity.

Infrastructure that Supports the Mission

SWART operates a multi-modal facility in Uvalde as its primary hub, along with a substation in Crystal City and satellite offices throughout the region. Looking ahead, SWART has completed planning for a future multi-modal facility in Eagle Pass to support fleet expansion, service growth, and improved connectivity.

Leadership Rooted in Experience

A key strength of SWART is its leadership team, representing more than 125 years of combined service:

- Sarah Hidalgo-Cook, General Manager (36 years)
- Cynthia Rodriguez, Assistant General Manager (30 years)
- Magdalena Flores, Chief Financial Manager (23 years)
- Carlos Mallen, Chief Operations Manager (28 years)
- Juan Rodriguez, Technology & Safety Manager (12 years)

This experience ensures strong financial stewardship, operational excellence, and a continued focus on safety and innovation.

Innovation Beyond Transportation

SWART's impact extends beyond transit. Partners In Transit, Inc. (PIT), a nonprofit, supports outreach, grant development, and community partnerships to strengthen regional mobility. In 2019, SWART formalized its mobility management efforts through the Southwest Initiative for Mobility (SWIM). Through travel training, trip planning, and coordination with more than 35 partners, SWIM helps riders confidently access transportation and essential services.

Recognized for Excellence

SWART's service has earned statewide and national recognition. In 2022, it was named Rural Transit System of the Year and recognized by the Federal Transit Administration for maintaining full service during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2024, SWART was named a candidate for the Community Transportation Association of America's Small System of the Year. Staff members have also received recognition for their leadership and dedication.



The Human Impact of Mobility

While statistics show scale, they only tell part of the story. Each of the more than 100,000 annual trips represents real impact:

- A patient reaching medical care.
- A parent maintaining employment.
- A veteran accessing services.
- A senior preserving independence.
- A student getting to class.

In rural Texas, transportation is not a convenience—it is a necessity. SWART ensures that need is met with reliability and dignity.

Moving Forward with Purpose

As the Texas Transit Association celebrates four decades of progress, SWART reflects its core values: service, innovation, and accountability. From five station wagons in 1981 to a system traveling nearly a million miles annually, SWART's success is defined not just by miles—but by opportunity delivered.

Looking ahead, SWART will continue investing in fleet modernization, technology, infrastructure in Eagle Pass, and expanded mobility services.

Its mission remains unchanged: connecting the people of Southwest Texas to opportunity—safely, reliably, and efficiently.

As SWART celebrates this milestone, it looks ahead with confidence—ready to keep Southwest Texas moving for decades to come.





Chris Mandrell

50 Years Moving Lubbock Forward A Message from the General Manager

“It is hard to believe it’s been almost 50 years since Citibus was started. I remember the day well.”

Those words come from John Wilson, Citibus General Manager from 1976 to 2012, who led the agency through decades of growth, innovation, and transformation.

When John reflects on December 6, 1975, the memories are vivid. That day marked the launch of a new vision for public transportation in Lubbock. Twenty of the 24 newly delivered 21-passenger Grumman buses rolled out, expanding the system from 12 routes to 20 and doubling the number of operators overnight. Citibus introduced a new logo and developed its first formal marketing plan — bold steps for a young and ambitious transit agency.

Of course, not everything went according to plan.

Just two days before service began, it was discovered that 23 of the 24 electronic fareboxes had been wired incorrectly. With little time to spare, a technician from GFI was called in. In the meantime, burlap sacks were placed over the fareboxes — and Citibus’ first day of service was free. What could have been a setback became a memorable beginning and a tremendous success with the public.

The early facilities reflected humble beginnings. Operations ran from a three-bay service area where washing a bus often meant water spilling into the next stall. There were only two offices — one serving simultaneously as the general manager’s office, supervisors’ workspace, and money-counting room. Fumes from the maintenance bay drifted into the reception area. The building wasn’t large enough to house the fleet, so a lot across the street was purchased, paved, and fenced for parking. The 25th bus was wheelchair equipped, marking the beginning of demand response service in February 1977 — an early commitment to accessibility.

From those modest roots, Citibus grew.

Today, as we celebrate 50 years, I stand deeply grateful for the foundation John and his team built. His leadership from 1976 to 2012 shaped the culture, resilience, and vision that continue to guide us today. His steady hand and pioneering spirit established a legacy that we are honored to carry forward.

Citibus now spans nearly two full city blocks of facilities, with expanded maintenance operations, a dedicated wash bay, and parking capacity for more than 100 buses. The downtown transfer station opened in 1994, strengthening connectivity across the system. In the years that followed, additional services and partnerships expanded our reach and impact.



Roadeo



Roadeo



John Wilson

While our infrastructure has grown and our fleet has modernized, our purpose remains unchanged.

For five decades, Citibus has supported the daily rhythm of Lubbock. We’ve taken parents to early morning shifts, transported high school students and Texas Tech students to class, and ensured residents reach life-sustaining medical appointments — including dialysis and ongoing treatments — with dignity and reliability. We’ve provided independence for those who rely on transit as their primary connection to opportunity.

We’ve also become a civic partner woven into the fabric of our community. From trolley service during the First Friday Art Trail to supporting Lemonade Day, participating in Juneteenth celebrations, and offering free fare on Earth Day, we believe transit is about more than movement — it is about access, visibility, and collaboration.

In moments that matter most, Citibus stands ready. We offer free rides on Election Day to ensure access to the polls and complimentary New Year’s Eve transportation to help keep our streets safe. Each football season, our Park-N-Ride Gameday Express carries thousands of Texas Tech Red Raider fans to and from every home game — making public transit part of a cherished West Texas tradition.

As host of the 2026 Texas Transit Association Conference & Roadeo, we are honored to celebrate not only this milestone but also the professionalism and excellence of transit agencies across Texas. The Roadeo showcases the skill, safety, and service that define our industry — values that have guided Citibus since that first day in 1975.

I am proud to follow in the footsteps of a mentor whose leadership helped build this organization. His legacy inspires us as we look ahead with optimism and determination.

Fifty years is a remarkable milestone. But the road ahead is even more exciting.

Here’s to the next 50 years of moving Lubbock – and Texas – forward.

Chris Mandrell
General Manager, Citibus



Bus Stop in 1997



Admin Office 1997



Lubbock Bus Company



Lubbock Bus Company

CCRTA Celebrates 40 Years of Leadership, Innovation, and Community Connection

When the clock struck midnight on January 1, 2026, it marked more than the start of a new year for the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA). It signaled a major milestone: 40 years of CCRTA connecting people, places, and opportunity across the Coastal Bend.

For four decades, CCRTA buses have been a familiar sight throughout the region, helping workers get to their jobs, students reach their classrooms, families access healthcare, and neighbors stay connected to their community. Since officially beginning operations in January 1986, the agency has grown from a newly formed regional authority into a modern transit system that plays a vital role in economic mobility and quality of life throughout the Corpus Christi region.

CCRTA's story began with a pivotal decision by local voters in 1985. Residents approved a half-cent sales tax to establish an independent regional transportation authority, laying the groundwork for a public transit system designed to serve the growing needs of Corpus Christi and surrounding communities. That vote represented both a commitment to mobility and a shared belief that reliable transportation strengthens communities. Helping lead the organization through its early days were Tom Niskala, CCRTA's first General Manager, and Patricia "Pat" Eisenhower, CCRTA's first Board Chair. The pair helped navigate the transition from a city-operated system to a regional authority.



Many in the transit industry consider Carol Flowers as a matriarch of CCRTA. She dedicated more than 40 years to CCRTA and was well-respected through the transit industry. While Carol Flowers passed away in 2022, her legacy continues to shape the organization. The Board of Directors recently voted unanimously to honor her contributions by naming the Bear Lane Facility, where she spent much of her career, in her memory.

"We stand on the shoulders of those who built this organization from the ground up, from Board Members to Bus Operators," said Derrick Majchszak, CCRTA Chief Executive Officer. "Celebrating 40 years is a tremendous honor, and their work laid the foundation that allows us to keep innovating and expanding our system."

Today, CCRTA has an updated look, with a new color scheme and branding to match the coastal region it serves. The system provides more than 3.8 million passenger trips each year through its fixed-route, paratransit, vanpool, and specialized services. CCRTA also plays a vital role in the region's emergency response, helping evacuate individuals during hurricanes, extreme weather events, and other crises.

At the heart of these services is CCRTA's mission to connect people to opportunity through safe, reliable, and accessible transportation. "I use the bus to get to work every day and come back home. It's very convenient using it and it helps me save money," said Soleil Day, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi graduate and current rider. CCRTA provides fare-free rides to all students and senior citizens (65+), reducing transportation barriers for the communities that need transit most and enhancing the economic vitality.

Looking ahead, CCRTA continues to invest in transit across the Coastal Bend. Recent fleet acquisitions funded through competitive federal



CORPUS CHRISTI REGIONAL
TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY



grant programs have improved reliability, increased operational efficiency, and enhanced the rider experience with modern vehicles and technology. Even with new fleet and technology, Bus Operators continue to be the central point of service.

"I love my job. I love picking up my passengers and transporting them safely, and I look out for them," stated Maria Flores, who has served the CCRTA for almost 39 years as a Bus Operator.

One of the agency's most significant upcoming investments is the development of a new Maintenance Facility, as CCRTA's current facility was built before modern windstorm standards. This state-of-the-art facility will support system growth, assist with emergency response, and provide maintenance employees with protection from the elements. The project represents a generational investment in the long-term sustainability of the CCRTA. The \$46.28 million in competitive funding awarded to CCRTA is the largest amount received in the organization's history.

Safety continues to be paramount to CCRTA. Security and Police Officers patrol all transfer stations, board buses, and protect the community. The organization's "Know the Signs" Human Trafficking Awareness campaign has received national recognition from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and is complemented by annual Human Trafficking Summits hosted by the agency.

"Our responsibility extends beyond just transportation," said Board Chair Arthur Granado. "We are entrusted with the safety of our riders and employees every day. By investing in modern facilities, new buses, updated equipment, and strong leadership, we are ensuring that CCRTA continues to operate with excellence and integrity for decades to come."

As CCRTA enters its fifth decade, there has been tremendous change, but the heart remains the same: its workforce. From the Bus Operators greeting riders each morning, to the mechanics working overnight to keep the buses running smoothly, everyone works together to best serve the communities who rely upon it.

The journey from a newly formed authority to a modern regional transit system has been shaped by leadership, dedication, and the trust of the community it serves. The next chapter promises even greater opportunities to connect, serve, and move the region forward.



RIO DRIVES OPPORTUNITY IN NEW BRAUNFELS BEYOND TRANSPORTATION



RIO ride the rio
New Braunfels Transit



Supporting access to transportation in New Braunfels through Rio is about more than mobility, it's about economic stability, public health, and overall quality of life. By providing reliable, easy access to transportation, Rio helps reduce barriers to employment, which helps to strengthen the local economy. Rio also allows residents to fully participate in their community by providing transportation to community events, government meetings, and volunteer opportunities. The service is a proactive approach to ensuring essential services are not limited by transportation barriers. Launching and operating Rio meets an important objective in New Braunfels' Strategic Plan.

Rio improves local public transportation services to connect the community to employment, education, healthcare, and other destinations. For years, City staff heard from the community about the need to improve public transportation in New Braunfels, so when New Braunfels was reclassified as a Small Urban Area in the 2020 Census it allowed the City to receive federal transit funding under the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funding Program. The City became a direct recipient of FTA funds, which means the City maintains direct control over public transportation in New Braunfels and provides greater autonomy over funding allocations. Rio's full turnkey micro-transit service was determined to be the best option to immediately improve public transit and allow a data-driven process to scale the service to meet community needs.

Since its launch in November 2025, Rio has had a positive impact on New Braunfels. Transit was a new concept for the City, and staff were unsure how it would be accepted. Within the first month and a half, Rio had over 7,000 rides and reached 10,000 rides on January 20, 2026. Since its launch, there have been only three days when daily ridership fell below 100, and two of those days were the result of inclement weather.

Riders use Rio for a variety of reasons, including going to work or school, medical care, visiting family, going to the movies, shopping, and more, and feedback from riders has been very positive. Whether it is saving a rider money, getting a parent out of the house instead of relying on a child for transportation, or helping a new resident learn how to use public transportation, the service has been received positively in the New Braunfels community.

Changes to the service will continue to be evaluated with an eye towards future expansion of the program. After the first full 6 months of service, the City will evaluate the program to decide if any changes or updates are needed. Those possible changes include an expanded service map and extended hours of service.

To learn more about Rio in New Braunfels, visit www.newbraunfels.gov/ridetherio.

GOBUS
EAST TEXAS TRANSIT



GOBUS STAFF CELEBRATE A NEW MILESTONE — EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

COMMUNITY • SERVICE • EAST TEXAS

The People Behind *the Miles*

GoBus is often measured by routes, miles, and trips - but its true impact is defined by the people who make those numbers possible. Every day across East Texas, GoBus drivers, dispatchers, call center staff, mechanics, road supervisors, and managers work together to ensure residents can access jobs, healthcare, education, and essential services.

In rural communities, public transportation is not a convenience. It is a lifeline. From early morning pull-outs to late-day returns, GoBus staff operate across large geographies and changing conditions with professionalism, adaptability, and care for the communities they serve.

“Their work requires problem-solving in real time, coordination across teams, and a commitment to safety and reliability for every rider.”

Vince Huerta, Director of Transportation

GOBUS • EAST TEXAS

CONGRATULATIONS TO SUN METRO DIRECTOR ANTHONY DEKEYZER, TTA'S 2025 OUTSTANDING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GENERAL MANAGER



Sun Metro of El Paso, Texas, celebrates Director Anthony DeKeyzer on being named the Texas Transportation Authority's 2025 Outstanding Transportation General Manager.

Mr. DeKeyzer, a retired Army colonel, has leveraged his resilient leadership to propel Sun Metro into one of the most innovative transit systems in Texas. With bold vision and an unwavering commitment to public service, he has guided the organization through transformative growth and adversity while keeping the El Paso community at the heart of every decision.

Through Sun Metro Rising — a full network redesign launching in 2026 — and the rollout of the system's first

electric fleet and charging infrastructure supporting LIFT paratransit and future microtransit services, Mr. DeKeyzer is advancing one of the most transformative and sustainable chapters in the organization's history.

We are proud to congratulate him on this achievement and are honored to serve alongside him as we move El Paso forward



DRIVING COMMUNITY CONNECTION: TRANSIT'S IMPACT ACROSS TEXAS

In a vast, fast-growing state like Texas, mobility is a lifeline. From urban centers to rural communities, public transportation connects people to jobs, education, healthcare, and daily needs. As Texas continues to expand, transit systems are working to keep mobility accessible and reliable for everyone.

Transit serves as a critical community connector. For residents without access to a personal vehicle, it provides essential links to opportunity and independence. Large urban systems move millions, while smaller networks ensure access to key resources in less dense areas. Campus shuttles keep students moving efficiently, reinforcing transit's role in daily life across the state.

Transit agencies have spent decades building systems tailored to their communities. Investments in fixed-route services, paratransit, and emerging on-demand options reflect changing needs and demographics. These long-term efforts have strengthened trust



between agencies, local leaders, and the people they serve.

Behind every system are dedicated professionals—drivers, dispatchers, mechanics, and support staff—who keep operations running safely and smoothly. Many live in the communities they serve, creating a strong sense of connection and accountability. Workforce development programs, including student employment opportunities, help build career pathways while strengthening local economies.

As Texas grows, innovation is expanding access. Microtransit and enhanced paratransit services offer flexible, user-focused solutions where traditional routes may fall short. These advancements reflect a shift toward more adaptable, data-driven systems.

Public transportation in Texas remains essential to economic mobility, community connection, and quality of life—helping shape a more connected future for all.





Save the Date

TTA 2027 ANNUAL CONFERENCE · EXPO · ROADEO

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