



In Transit

November/December 2007

A Newsletter for King County Metro Transit Employees



From the desk of the General Manager

Another banner year!

First of all, I want to wish everyone a very safe and happy holiday season. You've earned it; with your help, Metro Transit rose to new heights in 2007.

It was an active year. Business was booming, and we set new records for customers served in nearly every program Metro offered. Perhaps our most visible achievement was the reopening of the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel, a superb example of teamwork throughout our organization. Then there were the pivotal roles many of you played in mitigating the impacts on our services, customers, and the community at large during the summer I-5 lane closures.

While these high-profile projects drew a lot of attention, we forged quietly ahead in many other important areas. To name just a few of these, in 2007 we did the following:

- Moved into a new radio communications center;
- Signed a five-year bus procurement contract that gives us flexibility in when, how many, and what types of coaches we can order to meet our service needs;
- Launched Transit Now improvements such as service-hour additions, signed a service partnership agreement with Children's Hospital and received appli-

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We'll Get You There

Emergency exercise in transit tunnel



Smoke from a simulated bomb clouded the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel's Pioneer Square Station during an emergency exercise in November. Metro role players added realism to the drill by posing as terrorists and victims. Turn to page 4 for more information.

Ridesharing is a growing part of the solution to traffic woes

As traffic congestion, global warming, gas prices, and the high cost of transportation improvements dominate local headlines, Metro's Rideshare Operations continues to generate good news. It is the largest public commuter van program in the United States, providing more than three million passenger trips each year to commuters who are not well served by traditional bus service.

The VanPool and VanShare programs passed a milestone this fall, with more than 1,000 commuter vans in service for the first time. Total commuter van trips are up about 20 percent over last year. VanPool and VanShare passenger fares, which cover 100 percent of operating and capital costs plus 25 percent of administrative costs, were increased in 2007.

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General Manager

cations for potential partnerships with many others, and initiated several RapidRide service planning efforts;

- Achieved major Smart Card (ORCA) milestones: beta testing, final design (making it possible to implement ORCA at the beginning of 2009), and the commencement of the On-Board Systems project due for completion in 2010;
- Committed to buying 2 million gallons of Washington State-grown biodiesel fuel made from canola oil and to using a 20-percent biodiesel fuel mix fleetwide;
- Instituted programs and procedures to increase employee attendance and reduce absences, resulting in decreased workers' compensation, sick leave, overtime, and other absentee-related costs;
- Solidified the role of the Metro Transit Police unit as a vital part of Metro Transit via the "See Something, Say Something" security awareness program, "intersection" meetings with Service Communications and Service Quality staffs, and radio-interoperability enhancements that improved communications between transit police, transit operations, and contract security personnel;
- Established a new platform for Metro's fixed-fleet radio operations under the Transit Radio System Site Improvements Project while simultaneously addressing cross-agency emergency radio interoperability and FCC regulations;
- Kicked off a project to upgrade all of our transit signs with a new design; and
- Looked forward to getting our rail "feet" wet with the start of South Lake Union Streetcar operations.

I thank all of you for your dedication and hard work this past year. Whether you were involved in the projects listed above or not, you each contributed to our success.

We are not done, of course; big challenges await us in 2008. Finishing the Smart Card project stands at the top of the list, followed closely



Performance corner

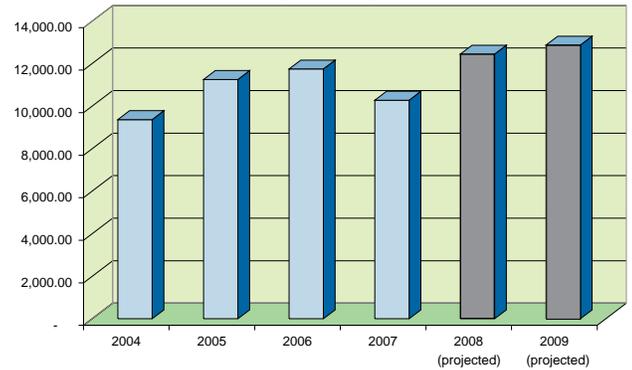
Reducing Metro's carbon "wheel print"

Metro has made major progress in reducing its use of fossil fuels and its emission of fuel-related greenhouse gases over the past few years, while continuing to provide high-quality transit service to a growing number of riders. "Consistent with Executive **Ron Sims'** policy direction," said Vehicle Maintenance Manager **Jim Boon**, "Metro is moving rapidly forward with hybrid diesel and biodiesel technologies, leading the industry in efforts to reduce the carbon 'wheel print' of transit."

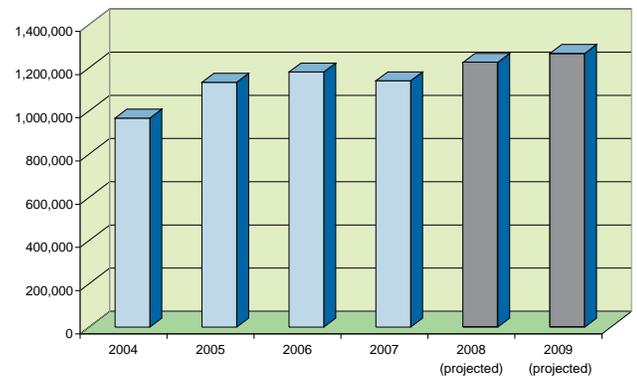
The conversion of Metro's diesel coaches to 20-percent biodiesel fuel began in 2004 and was completed in July 2007. The proportion of Metro's fuel energy that is derived from biodiesel has increased from 0.2 percent in 2004 to an estimated 16 percent in 2007. In future years, biodiesel will account for almost 20 percent of Metro's fuel energy.

The year 2004 also saw Metro take delivery of its first hybrid diesel/electric coaches. Compared to an equal number of diesel coaches, the 213 hybrid coaches now in our fleet will reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by an estimated 10,000 tons, and reduce diesel fuel use by 1.1 million gallons, in 2007. Thirty-five more hybrid coaches will be added to the fleet by 2009, leading to even greater fuel savings and reductions in greenhouse-gas emissions over the next few years.

Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from hybrid coaches (in tons)



Reductions in fuel use from hybrid coaches (in gallons)



by implementing more Transit Now services, approving new partnership programs, and taking delivery of new buses in the spring, to name a few. In addition, we will be working closely with the Washington State Department of Transportation on the purchase and planned use of 20 buses connected with mitigating impacts of first-stage work on the Alaskan Way Viaduct.

As you can see, there is still a lot of work ahead and, with voters rejecting Proposition 1, the transportation issues faced by King County and the region may need to be looked at in different ways. I anticipate that Metro Transit will be in the middle of many alternative plans. We'll be ready.

Enjoy the ride!
—Kevin Desmond

Jenkins retires

After seeing the South Lake Union Streetcar successfully begin operations on Dec. 12, **Austin Jenkins** retired from his post as manager of Metro's Light Rail Section as of Dec. 14. The section operates the streetcar and is also gearing up to provide operations for Sound Transit's Link light rail, which is scheduled to join buses in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel in 2009. *In Transit* thanks Jenkins for his dedication to getting the Light Rail Section off the ground and wishes him the best of luck in the future.



Continued from page 1

Rideshare

Rideshare Operations helped keep commuters moving during the two-week closure of Interstate 5 lanes in August by temporarily easing vanpool startup requirements. Twenty-seven new vanpool and vanshare groups formed in less than two weeks, and 18 of these continued after the I-5 closure ended.

In addition to the VanPool program, RideShare Operations provides the following services:

- **VanShare, introduced in 2001, provides connections for the first or last leg of the commute to those who use the bus, rail, ferry, or a vanpool.**
- **The Custom Bus program provides express bus service to students or employees through a cost-sharing arrangement with a school or business.**
- **RideshareOnline.com provides ride matches to help increase the number of commuters who use carpools or commuter vans to get to work or school.**

During a promotion period last summer, 7 percent more people requested rideshare matches through RideshareOnline.com than during the same period the previous year. The site helps people find partners for vanpools, carpools, or shared trips to special events such as concerts or ball games, and today has more than 12,000 people in its active registry.

Metro trains and supports more than 900 volunteer drivers each year; these drivers in turn provide their fellow commuters with HOV rides for medium- to long-distance work trips. Metro provides vans that seat 7-15 passengers, training, staff support, maintenance, fuel, and insurance.

Syd Pawlowski, supervisor of RideShare Operations, says direct marketing is key to attracting commuters to Metro's rideshare programs. During the promotion last spring and another during the summer, commuters who applied for a rideshare on RideshareOnline.com were entered into a weekly drawing for a \$50 gift card. Employee transportation coordinators who promoted RideshareOnline.com also were eligible for prizes, including trips to Costa Rica and Sun Valley, Idaho. This incentive program was funded by the Washington State Ridesharing Organization.

A year-long promotional program called "Fill It Up," funded by a grant from the Washington State Department of Transportation, gave \$50 gift cards to new vanpool riders, drivers, bookkeepers, and recruiters. Rideshare Operations plans to launch a follow-up program, "Fill It Up—Again," in January 2008.

Another promotion planned for next year will target commuters traveling to Bellevue or Renton in an effort to cut drive-alone car trips on Interstate 405. People who register carpools or track their carpool usage on

RideshareOnline.com will be eligible to win gift cards. By getting people to register their carpools, Metro will gain good data on the number of people who are sharing private vehicles.

Some of the recent growth in ridesharing can also be credited to improved online rideshare tools that make it easier for people to participate, and to the addition of new Sounder train service. Nine new vanshare groups formed at train depots after Sound Transit added an early train in September.

Did you know...

Each year, King County Metro vanpoolers...

- **stop more than 5 million pounds of pollution from being emitted**
- **save more than 4.5 million gallons of gasoline**
- **save, on average, more than \$6,000 each in commuting costs over driving alone**

They also remove more than 5,000 vehicles per day from Puget Sound highways, with one vanpool removing up to 14 cars from the road.

In Transit online

Current and past issues of *In Transit* are available on the King County Web site at www.metrokc.gov/kcdot/aboutus/intransit/

SHORT SHOTS IN TRANSIT

News briefs in and around the Transit Division



One of the new streetcars now running on the South Lake Union–downtown Seattle route.

■ **New streetcars are ready to roll**—Streetcars have returned to Seattle. On Dec. 12, the South Lake Union line began operating on a round-trip route from Fairview Avenue and Ward Street in the South Lake Union neighborhood to Westlake Avenue and Olive Way near the Westlake Transit Hub. The three new streetcars, made by Inekon Trams, have been designed to maximize comfort and access for all travelers. They run at street level, so passengers—even those with wheelchairs or strollers—can board easily without having to contend with steps or lifts.

■ **Partners in Transit takes to the airwaves**—Metro’s Partners in Transit program establishes relationships with organizations to help increase ridership and reduce drive-alone trips. **Sunny Knott** and **Ref Lindmark** of Market Development work with each partner to develop a program that resonates with that organization’s audiences or customers. Each program uses pledges, social prompts, and incentives to help people change their travel behavior.

Metro’s most recent Partner in Transit is Entercom Seattle, which operates radio stations 103.7 “The Mountain,” 100.7 “The Wolf,” KISW, and 107.7 “The End.” Entercom and 107.7 The End used their on-air and Web site promotion of

the Sept. 22 EndFest concert at Qwest Field to encourage attendees to take transit to the show. Banner ads on the radio station’s Web site touted Metro’s online Trip Planner.

At the concert, attendees who showed a bus pass or transfer got front-of-the-line privileges and a special “Ride This” button that made them eligible for further prizes. Station disc jockeys mingled with the crowd, and when they spotted a person wearing the button, they gave him or her a coffee card or a backstage pass. Metro’s Market Development group is looking at expanding the partnership to include all Entercom stations for concerts, on-air promotions, and special programs such as the Green Report on KMTT.

■ **Metro hosts terrorism exercise in tunnel**—Metro hosted a full-scale emergency

response exercise in the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel on Nov. 4. The drill focused on Metro’s ability to work and communicate with responding public safety agencies in the event of a disaster or terrorist attack in the tunnel—in this case, a simulated bombing and hostage situation in Pioneer Square Station. The scenario included bomb detonations on the station platform and an adjacent coach, and hostages being held on another coach at the other end of the station.

Participating Metro groups included Operations, Vehicle Maintenance, Light Rail, and Power and Facilities. Also participating were the Seattle Police and Fire Departments, Metro Transit Police, and King County Sheriff’s Office. All of these agencies came together to establish a unified command to manage and respond to the simulated events. Observers were on hand from the Washington State Patrol, the 10th National Guard Civil Support Team, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Transportation Security Administration.



EndFest concertgoers proudly display their “Ride This” buttons in September.



(Left photo) **John Whitney** takes a spin at the **Wheel of Fortune** while **Monique Allen** looks on. (Center photo) **Karl Otterstrom** drives a remote-controlled miniature electric coach in the mock bus tunnel as wife **Kate** and daughter **Inge** and **Rose McCracken**, left, watch the ensuing chaos. (Right photo) **Lisa Shafer** competes in the **Wheelchair Challenge**, with **Ross Hudson** cheering her on.

■ **Fun for all at Service Development carnival**—Service Development transformed its cubicles, aisles, and conference rooms into a festive carnival on Nov. 6 to raise funds for the Employee Giving Program. The annual event featured a silent auction, drawings, games of chance and skill, and a bake sale. A pizza café featured live music by “Los Gatos,” which consists of Service Development’s own **Victor Obeso, Dale Cummings, and Drew Robison**. Cummings’ wife, Judith Cummings, made a special guest appearance, playing the fiddle and singing a Gaelic song.

This year a new Wheel of Fortune game (with prizes including a chance in a drawing for an iPod and an elevator ride with Department of Transportation Director **Harold Taniguchi**) and a simulated Transit Tunnel Tour joined returning favorites such as the ever-popular Wheelchair Challenge. **Michelle Martin** of Wastewater Treatment (Department of Natural Resources and Parks) was the women’s category winner and overall champion. **Bill Bryant** of Service Development won the men’s category. Thanks to everyone’s generosity, the

event raised \$1,871 for Northwest Harvest.

■ **Transit Now partnerships begin with Children’s Hospital**—Metro partnered with Children’s Hospital and Medical Center this year to add 63 new trips on Routes 25 and 75, beginning with the September service change. The agreement runs for five years and commits about 6,700 annual service hours at an approximate cost of \$700,000 per year. As required under Transit Now, Children’s will pay one-third of that cost.

Children’s has a strong employee-commute program, including a Metro FlexPass contract that covers 3,500 employees at its main hospital and at 14 other facilities. Employees have unlimited access to Metro Transit, Pierce Transit, Community Transit, and Sound Transit buses; 100 percent subsidy of Metro, Pierce, and Community Transit van services; \$20 per month toward Vanshare; Metro’s Home Free Guarantee program; and programs for walking and bicycling. Their latest FlexPass agreement reflects a 15-percent increase in transit use and a 20-percent increase in vanpool use. The medical center’s

goals are to limit vehicular trips to a level that does not adversely affect the community or limit parking, and to provide a model of creative transportation strategies in the context of global climate change.

■ **Light rail open house planned**—On March 7, 2008, from 1 to 5 p.m., the Light Rail section will hold an open house and job fair at its new Operations and Maintenance Facility. The event will feature information about job opportunities with Light Rail and tours of the facility.

In Transit



We'll Get You There

If you have any questions, comments or story ideas, send them to ***In Transit***, M.S. KSC-TR-0824, or contact **Anna Peekstok**: 206-263-6482 or anna.peekstok@kingcounty.gov.
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KUDOS IN TRANSIT

Transit operators of the month

October 2007

Atlantic Base: **Anthony Dixon**
 Bellevue Base: **Gary Reed**
 Central Base: **Mark Peterson**
 East Base: **Forrest Bathurst**
 North Base: **Michael Leck**
 Ryerson Base: **Chai Kunjara**
 South Base: **Al Ramey**

November 2007

Atlantic Base: **Nathanael Chappelle**
 Bellevue Base: **Ricardo Gallardo**
 Central Base: **Mark Lewis**
 East Base: **Brett Whiting**
 North Base: **John Slater**
 Ryerson Base: **Brigette Graupe**
 South Base: **Warren Yee**

■ **Towering achievement on Rattlesnake Mountain**—This year, Metro’s Design and Construction Section launched the Transit Radio System Site Improvements Project to establish a new platform for Metro’s fixed-fleet radio operations, address interagency radio operations needs, and meet federal requirements to move transit radio operations to the 700MHz radio frequency band in 2009. Among the project’s 10 sites, the remote Rattlesnake Mountain site presented unique design and construction challenges. It involved building a new 275-foot-tall



The new radio tower being assembled on Rattlesnake Mountain.

communications tower—one of the tallest self-supporting lattice towers of its kind—as well as a massive concrete support structure, right next to an existing 185-foot tower. The installation and activation of the new tower required extensive coordination among several public agencies, contractors, and vendors to ensure safe delivery and construction and the successful transfer of Metro’s radio operations and emergency services to the new tower while keeping down time to an absolute minimum. Our thanks to Design and Construction for a job well done.

■ **KCDOT team leads successful 2007 online auction**—*In Transit* congratulates the 2007 Auction Team and all bidders for a successful online auction, which raised \$4,847.41 for this year’s Annual Charitable Campaign. The team members were **Ruth Andrews** and **Lois Watt** from the Transit Division and **Teresa Lee** and **Harriette Thrash-Killham** from the Road Services Division.

■ **Metro’s own poet in motion**—Central Base operator **Linda Anderson** was an honored guest at “Poetry in Motion,” the 2007 Poetry on Buses launch party at the Moore Theater on Nov. 7. Her “Mercurial Moon” was one of 55 poems selected from the 3,000 entered in this year’s Poetry on the Bus contest, more than twice the number of submissions received in 2005. This year’s contest theme was “Dreams.” Anderson’s entry will be published in a book of poems and displayed on Metro buses, and it and others can be heard on an audio slide show on the Seattle Times Web site (http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/entertainment/2003997670_poetrybus07.html).

Mercurial Moon

Pink streetlight through my curtain,
Be a mercurial moon.

And melt the grey concrete
To a soft green-schist stream

That will stretch curl, twist jump,
Deepen in shadow pools,
Spread rapids down the block.

Blackberries encroaching our sidewalk,
Go! Cover those riverbanks!



Poetry on Buses
2007
page 31
by: Linda Anderson



Design by: N&M Brand
King County METRO CULTURE

This bus poster features “Mercurial Moon” by Metro’s own Linda Anderson.

We'll Get You There

Spotlight on Responsiveness

When it comes to delivering safe, efficient, and on-time bus service, Metro's Service Quality supervisors are on the front line, making real-time decisions to head off or resolve problems that affect transit operations.

Supervised by **Vicki LaRitz**, supported by four chiefs, and requiring 30 separate daily shifts, the Service Quality group provides 24/7 coverage for the entire Metro system.

Recruited from the ranks of Metro's 2,600 bus drivers, these 50 "first-liners" make sure that transit services are delivered to the public at a consistently high level of performance.

Their duties are extremely diverse. They respond to all trouble calls—mechanical, operational, and personal. They assist police, fire, and emergency medical personnel when an accident or incident involves Metro buses, passengers, or transit facilities. They make sure that coach operators are complying with all rules of the road and with Metro's policies and procedures, including checking the on-time performance of routes and individual bus trips.

They also plan and manage special events, from simple neighborhood parades to protest marches and football games, working closely with event organizers and police to minimize disruptions to transit service and inconvenience to Metro customers.

Service Quality first-liners routinely inspect Metro's park-and-ride lots, transit centers, and thousands of bus shelters. In addition, they post much of the rider information that accompanies the closure of bus shelters and streets for private and public projects such as the Interstate 5 lane closure last summer.

First-liners must know all routes in their assigned districts, including all deadhead routes to the base, express-route variations, special-service options, and snow reroutes. They supply operators on the road with timetables and transfers when they run out and assist passengers by answering questions, giving directions, and working out disputes.

When Metro says, "We'll get you there," Service Quality is a big part of the reason why our customers can rely on that promise.



Metro first-liner Debra Ray works on a faulty fare box called in by a driver.

Metro's nutcracker has a certain glow

"Riding the Magic Carpet," Metro's entry in the Third Annual Nutcracker March in downtown Seattle, will be on display near the Downtown Seattle Transit Tunnel's Westlake Station through Jan. 4. Painted and detailed by

Metro's own Paint Shop and designed by Star Design Studio, the larger-than-life-size sculpture won the 2007 People's Choice Award and features details done in reflective paint (see bottom photo).

In all, 60 nutcrackers were decorated and displayed in downtown Seattle and sold in an online auction. The proceeds benefit Northwest Center, a nonprofit organization that promotes the rights and independence of people with developmental disabilities.



You might even say it glows...





ON THE MOVE

Transit Division retirements, promotions/job changes, new hires, and remembrances

Retirements

Operations—Operators

Diane Gaylord, East Base—Nov. 1; 30 years

Thomas Hale, South Base—Aug. 4; 6 years

Harry Kelly, South Base—Oct. 1; 28 years

Operations—Non-Operators

Linda Rostad, chief of operations (East Base)—Nov. 30; 30 years

Power and Facilities

Jo Jones, data administrator—Dec. 28; 26+ years

Sales and Customer Service

Tim Apicella, employer transportation representative (CTR Services)—Nov. 9; 16 years

Promotions and Job Changes

Information Technology

Catherine Boon to project/program manager IV from term-limited position

Ray Burgess to project/program manager IV from term-limited position

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Roger Bruckshen to acting administrative specialist III from administrative specialist II

Laird Chambers to acting rideshare service representative from administrative specialist III

Power and Facilities

Alan Huston to acting project/program manager I (Work Center) from facilities maintenance constructor

Sue Johnson to acting data administrator from administrative staff assistant

Eduardo Padilla to facilities chief from acting chief/lead custodian

Sales and Customer Services

Pat Banks to acting customer services supervisor from lead customer services coordinator

Charles Belcher to senior accounting representative from customer service representative

Cabrina Bell to acting fiscal specialist II from rider information specialist

Chris Daniels to acting lead customer services coordinator from senior rider information specialist (PM)

Mark Konecny to acting lead customer services coordinator from fiscal specialist II

Bill Mayo to acting senior accounting representative from customer assistance representative

John Riley, lead customer services coordinator (assigned from Rider Information to Customer Services)

Saravan Thangavelu to acting senior rider information specialist (PM) from rider information specialist

Transit HR

Adrienne Bunney to supervisor of employment from senior HR analyst

Berneta Walraven to employee & labor relations representative from senior HR analyst

Vehicle Maintenance

Bart Hedlund to lead sheet metal worker from sheet metal worker

Michael Humphrey to equipment dispatcher from equipment service worker

Gary Irby to acting communications specialist from lead transit parts specialist

Stan Lillquist to acting chief of body shop (swing shift, Component Supply Center) from lead mechanic

Bill Lushenko to acting equipment painter from paint prep technician

Mike Rochon to acting lead transit parts specialist from transit parts specialist

Rich Zelinsky to acting lead electronic technician from electronic technician

New Hires

Information Technology

Eugene Overly, information technology project/manager II—Oct. 22

Paratransit/Rideshare Operations

Emily Cook, customer services specialist III (Rideshare Operations)—Aug. 31

Power and Facilities

Andre Boudy, utility laborer—Oct. 10

Mike Collins, project/program manager III (Work Center)—Oct. 20

Demetrius Dickerson, transit custodian II—Sep. 26

Habtu Gabreab, transit custodian II—Oct. 3

James Jacobs, utility laborer—Oct. 3

Stanley Jacobs, utility line worker—Oct. 22

Kirk Jones, utility line worker—Oct. 31

Benjamin Leano, transit custodian II—Aug. 31

Mohamed Samatar, transit custodian II—Sep. 26

James Simmons, Jr., utility laborer—Oct. 29

Daren Tharp, transit custodian II—Sep. 19

Gebrai Woldehaimanot, transit custodian II—Oct. 3

Transit HR

Silvette Lee, light rail senior HR analyst—Nov. 5

Patricia Parker, administrative specialist III (former short-term temp. position)—Nov. 9

Vehicle Maintenance

Brian Cabrera, mechanic—Nov. 5

Wilson Chambers, acting stores driver—Oct. 15

Tiberiu Dirdala, mechanic—Nov. 5

Dustin Wood, mechanic—Nov. 5

In Our Thoughts

Ken Taft, retired transit chief (35 years service), passed away in October

Marcus Silverhorn, line worker (16 years service), passed away Sep. 21