

Votran's

People Movers

May 2008

We drive a great bargain

Land use planning continues for the Central Florida commuter rail

Last July, the Volusia County Council agreed unanimously to participate in the development of a commuter rail system that will connect Volusia, Seminole, Orange and Osceola counties. Investment in commuter rail is significant, with Volusia County's commitment toward construction and operating costs as much as \$142.7 million over the next 30 years.

"It is our job to deal with the transportation issues of today and to anticipate the needs of tomorrow," said Frank Bruno, Volusia County chair and member of the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission.

"There is little to no existing development proximate to the DeLand and DeBary stations, which provides a unique opportunity for these sites," said project manager Lois Bollenback, Votran general manager.

To assist with planning, Volusia County and the City of DeBary joined forces to hire PB Consultant, Inc., a firm specializing in transit oriented development (TOD). "These consultants have worked

on projects around the world and bring a level of expertise that will help identify solutions that best match the desires of the community with the development needed to bring success to the rail project," Bollenback said. "This is not a decision-making process, but rather an opportunity for the community to learn about TOD from experts, and for those experts to collect information and input at the local level."

Earlier this year, public work sessions with residents, community advocates and property owners were held in DeBary and DeLand to get feedback on possible development scenarios. A tremendous amount of information was collected. A report will be drafted for public input then presented to the Volusia County Council and DeBary City Council.

Commuter trains were scheduled to begin operating between DeBary and Orlando by 2010. However, the future of the project now is uncertain after key legislation failed at the end of the just concluded session of the Florida Legislature.



A message from the General Manager

With motor fuel prices climbing toward \$4 a gallon, virtually everyone is being affected by the high cost of driving. The cost of oil is impacting food prices, the cost to mail a letter, the cost of commercial aviation.... On and on the list goes.

As you might expect, fuel is a major expense for Votran. And like everyone else, public transit is feeling the pinch of the cost of oil. Our fuel budget is up more than 40 percent. In the coming fiscal year budget, Votran will have to deal with a fuel increase of more than \$550,000.

Local governments are dealing with mandates from Tallahassee to reduce revenues. So, Votran must deal with higher costs while the operating budget stays flat, or even declines.

At the same time, more citizens are turning to Votran as a transportation alternative because they can't afford to drive themselves.

It's important to consider the rising cost of fuel because it's a major component of the budget recommendation submitted by Votran for the 2008-09 fiscal year. Rising fuel costs, along with reductions in local funding, mean it's likely we will have to modify some services to reduce expenses. Certainly, we'll do everything possible to continue meeting the transportation needs of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lois Bollenback".

Lois Bollenback
General Manager



PLANNING CONTINUES FOR COMMUTER RAIL

Trains were scheduled to operate by 2010 before the project stalled in Tallahassee

ITS project puts Votran on the cutting edge of technology

Votran hosted an open house to showcase the \$4.1-million Intelligent Transportation System installation that puts Votran, Volusia County's public transportation provider, on par with the type of advanced technology only available at some of the largest transit systems in the country. Local officials and transit providers from around the state attended the showcase to learn more about the project.

"The technologies adopted by Votran historically have been reserved for major market transit systems, and have provided tremendous operational efficiencies along with making transit more user friendly," said Dorsey Houtz, president of Avail Technologies Inc., the State College, Pa.-company that installed the technology for Votran.

"What makes this project unique is that working as a team with Votran we are launching a new level of product that wasn't available in the industry before," Houtz said. "The cutting-edge solution implemented by Avail and the creative adoption technique used by Votran prove that technology can be designed and adopted so smaller systems can leverage the same features. They also can provide the same operational improvements as mega transit systems without requiring the mega organizational support infrastructure."

Votran General Manager Lois Bollenback agreed the technology project has put the agency on the leading edge of technology for a transit system of its size.



CUSTOMER-FRIENDLY TECHNOLOGY SETS VOTRAN APART
County Council member Art Giles learns from Votran GM Lois Bollenback

"The overall package of improvements, called the Integrated Transit Operation Management System (ITOMS), helps to provide a more efficient, convenient and customer-friendly transit service within Volusia County," Bollenback said. The project includes a variety of components such as an automatic vehicle tracking and location system, mobile data terminals that transmit updated information to drivers in the field, improved scheduling and data collection software, automated passenger counters and a modernized radio system. The system then ties all these technologies together into a single operational platform that includes scheduling, revenue collection, accounting, traveler information, trip planning, client

registration, call taking, dispatching, reporting and data analysis.

Within months of implementation, Votran's ITOMS increased efficiencies for paratransit and fixed route fleets. By building better schedules, Votran was able to reduce the total number of operators needed to perform the same amount of service that had been provided before the installation.

"The new technologies already have increased efficiency, reduced operational costs and provided better service to our customers, and we will continue to see performance improvements as we become more comfortable with all the features available with our new system," said Bollenback.

Commutus Liberatus

Rx Treatment for commuter disorder approved

Researchers have found that people who make the daily commute from Volusia County to Orlando suffer from aggravation as a result of spending too much time on I-4. But they have discovered a service that eliminates the stress and reduces the expense of commuting to Orlando. Commutus Liberatus is approved for daily use by commuters of all ages. Visit our website at votran.org

- Park & Ride
- RideShare
- I-4 Express Bus with Guaranteed Ride Home
- Van Pool

Votran Commuter Assistance Program

866/610-RIDE (7433)

Votran is a service of Volusia County Government

Rider spotlight



Name: Susan Dickinson

Profile: Votran rider for 6 1/2 years. Relies on Votran fixed route service to get to work, shopping, and doctor appointments.

Quote: "The drivers are friendly and helpful. The service coverage is good but, maybe, we could have later times so I could work more hours at night."

Transportation Disadvantaged Day 2008 at the Capitol

Volusia County representatives recently participated in "The Difference Between Life and Living," an event organized by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) to increase the awareness of issues faced by transportation-disadvantaged people. The annual event in Tallahassee brings transportation issues to the attention of state legislators and the public.

"This year's event was a success," said Heather Blanck, Votran assistant general manager of planning, customer service and marketing. "The theme showcased our users. It truly put faces on the issues."

Legislative Day provides a platform for disabled advocates, system users and transportation providers to emphasize the value of transportation disadvantaged programs in preserving independence and quality of life for people who have limited mobility options.

While at the Capitol, the group met with area legislators to emphasize the value of transportation disadvantaged programs.



"My quality of life has been significantly improved by Votran services. Without the service, I would be stranded in my own home and would not be able to advocate for the needs of the handicapped. This not only improves quality of life for me, but also for all the handicapped citizens in Volusia County."

- Dave Dixon

The CTD was created in 1989 to oversee the needs of Florida's transportation disadvantaged population. This includes

people who are disabled, low-income, elderly or those who have no other means of transportation.

Votran: Almost 3.4 million boardings during past year

Votran, recorded 3,389,978 boardings during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30 a slight dip from the previous fiscal year.

"We're pleased to see how many people recognize that public transit offers an economical and environmentally sound alternative to driving," said Votran General Manager Lois Bollenback. "A variety of factors affect transit ridership and, generally, we see increases each year. But, a fare increase last year and cuts in the Medicaid program limited growth during this period."

Fixed route ridership throughout Volusia County, including trolley service, totaled 2,982,506 in fiscal year 2007 – a 3 percent decrease. However, night service

ridership increased almost 14 percent. The night service Route 17 grew 20 percent and Route 1 increased by 18 percent during the year. The busiest route continues to be Route 1 A/B, which serves S.R. A1A and the Granada Boulevard area in Ormond Beach, with nearly 427,407 boardings (comprising almost 16 percent of the east side service).

Ridership in West Volusia, including the Route 200 I-4 Express, was 386,583, up 5 percent from the previous year. Route 22 in Deltona experienced a 16-percent increase in boardings. The cross-county connector Route 60 ridership increased 8 percent.

Fixed route ridership for East Volusia,

including night service, was 2,555,759. Night service recorded 156,739 boardings this past year.

Votran's Gold Service paratransit vans transported 323,122 people, down slightly from the previous year. The decrease is attributed to a shift of Medicaid trips to private health service providers. Medicaid trips decreased 20 percent in fiscal year 2007.

Use of the Commuter Van Pool program remained steady at 26 vans and 84,350 trips in 2007. This saved participants 134,202 gallons of fuel over the course of the year. Commuter Assistance programs are expected to become more popular as fuel costs rise, Bollenback said.

Former GM Ken Fischer earns lifetime achievement award

Ken Fischer, Senior Vice-President and Managing Director for McDonald Transit Associates, has received the William G. Bell Lifetime Achievement Award from the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The prestigious award was presented at the commission's annual conference in Orlando.

Fischer was recognized for his dedicated and professional leadership as the general manager of Votran from 1980 - 2005 and his service as a commissioner and vice-chair of the Transportation Disadvantaged Commission for 10 years.

"Ken Fischer is highly competent, trustworthy and dependable," said Frank



KEN FISCHER

Bruno, Volusia County Chair. "These characteristics are what have made him a leader in the transportation industry."

The award is named for Dr. William Bell who had a vision in the 1970s of coordinated transportation and was instrumental in shaping the early development of the Florida program.

During the award presentation, it was noted that Fischer's leadership was demonstrated clearly by several key awards received during his tenure including the 1993 APTA Outstanding Achievement Award for Small Transit Systems; the 1997 Urban Community Transportation Coordinator of the Year and the Paratransit Operator of the Year and Scheduler of the Year, both awarded by the TD Commission in 2002.

Votran staff designs new mid-size bus that becomes state model

When manufacturers changed the design of mid-size buses used across the state by transit agencies, Votran's Director of Maintenance, Rick Kazawitch, didn't agree. The manufacturer's new design created a larger, less cost-effective bus. Because the mid-size bus is used in Votran's door-to-door paratransit service, a larger bus would not operate within some neighborhoods.

Kazawitch went to work designing a mid-size bus on the smaller chassis with the features needed for a paratransit bus service. The bus needs to accommodate wheelchairs and be able to maneuver through neighborhoods with narrow streets.

"My design accommodates the highest occupancy with the best safety designs," said Kazawitch. "There is so much behind the scenes in regards to safety – from the wiring and wheelchair lifts to the straps and anchors that secure the medical equipment needed."

His design has become a model for transit agencies across Florida.



VOTRAN MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR SETS STANDARD
Rick Kazawitch designs mid-size bus

VOTRAN's Mission

VOTRAN's mission is to identify and safely meet the mobility needs of Volusia County. This mission will be accomplished through a courteous, dependable and an environmentally-sound team commitment to quality service.

www.VOTRAN.org

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