A Roadeo to remember—those are the words that were repeated to me over and over again as I greeted the 1,400 spectators that came out to watch the 2018 International Bus Roadeo held at PSTA last month.

I was truly taken aback by the number of overwhelmingly positive comments directed towards the entire PSTA family, and I can genuinely say that this event could not have happened without the countless hours of dedicated teamwork from every single person at PSTA.

From our PSTA facilities team – who built a life-sized model PSTA bus from scratch – to the hundreds of PSTA employees who volunteers to help setup tables and tents—this was a colossal team effort, and I am extremely proud of every single one of our 600+ employees.

I am so thankful for the amount of support that PSTA received, along with the generous sponsorship package, from FPTA. Their donation was truly a testament to the statewide pride that can be shared amongst all of the transit systems across Florida—this roadeo was from all of us.

Just as many of your own transit systems are, PSTA is extremely complex. Hundreds of buses leave the yard each morning right on queue and time points are met like clockwork. Drivers check-in while others check-out and when everything works out just right, we are a well-oiled machine. Without teamwork,
All of the contestants performed in an exemplary manner, but, this was indeed a competition and the “best of the best” rose to the top. The overall event winners were as follows:

**Fixed Route Operators**
- 1st Place Operator- Rendol Whidden, Broward County Transit
- 2nd Place Operator- Peter Marchessault, Star Metro
- 3rd Place Operator- Gary Sauls, RTS-Gainesville

**Cutaway Operators**
- 1st Place Operator- Christopher Cowles, LeeTran
- 2nd Place Operator- Michael Wimberly, Calhoun County Transit
- 3rd Place Operator- Jose Hernandez, MV

**Van Operators**
- 1st Place Operator- Tommy Griffis, JTrans
- 2nd Place Operator- Raymond Aylmer, Gulf Transportation
- 3rd Place Operator- Bob Stutzman, Sarasota County Area Transit

**Paratransit Maintenance Division**
- 1st Place- Sherman Polydore, JTA
- 2nd Place- William Hernandez, Big Bend Transit
- 3rd Place- Angel Melendez, MV

**Fixed Route Maintenance Teams**
- 1st Place Maintenance Team- LYNX
- 2nd Place Maintenance Team- Jacksonville Transportation Authority
- 3rd Place Maintenance Team- Votran

**Grand Champions**
- Overall Fixed Route Grand Champions- LYNX
- Overall Paratransit Grand Champions- Big Bend Transit

Congratulations to all of the winners! And, THANK YOU to Votran for a fantastic event!

Teamwork is how we all do what we do every single day, and teamwork is what is going to keep public transportation innovating and creating its way into the future.

As we look back on this year’s roadeo, I will remember the cheers and applause of the crowds as they sat under shaded tents enjoying the Florida sun. I will remember the moment PSTA’s very own Bus Operator, Nehemia Guerra, completed his fourth-place winning run. But most of all, I will remember the moments I was able to share with my entire PSTA family as everyone worked together to make this Roadeo truly one to remember.

Your Chair,
Brad Miller
Triple Crown Roadeo
THE JEWEL OF TRANSIT

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BUY AMERICA COMPLIANT
Lee County Transit, LeeTran, headquartered in Fort Myers, launched a new type of service this season on Fort Myers Beach. Two open-air trams were introduced on the beach were a huge hit with tourist and visitors alike. The trams provided transportation through the busiest commercial area on the island, which is home to bars, restaurants, shopping and attractions. It also provided easy access to the beach, as it passed numerous beach accessibility points and many of the large hotel properties. What really set the tram apart from LeeTran’s standard trolley service was its open-air atmosphere and the fact that it was free of charge. This made the tram an ideal hop-on-hop-off mode of transportation for riders to experience all Fort Myers Beach has to offer.

Branded LeeTram, the service has seen a ridership of over 100,000 passengers in just over two months, with the 100,000th passenger boarding LeeTram on April 18. In the height of season, the service provided over 1,600 daily passenger trips on average, and high days reached well over 2,000 passengers.

Along with running the open-air trams, LeeTran continued its regular seasonal Beach Trolley routes, providing service from its new Beach Park & Ride facility to Estero Island, as well as providing trolley service the length of Estero Island. While the Tram service was free of charge, the Beach Trolley service continued to collect the 75 cents per ride fare.

“We are beyond thrilled with the success of LeeTram,” said Steve Myers, director of Lee County Transit. “It’s taken our whole staff to make this possible, but we were able to pull it off and have record breaking numbers. We are always looking for new, innovative ways to provide great service to our customers, and LeeTram provides an easy and memorable way to travel along Fort Myers Beach.”

LeeTram is a seasonal service, operating during the main tourist season for Lee County: January through Easter. Because of its resounding success this year, LeeTran was asked to extend the service through May 30. Once the tram route is complete for this year, the LeeTran team will brainstorm what can be done to further enhance the service for future years.

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The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) continues its commitment to reducing the Authority’s carbon footprint in the Tampa Bay area. On Wednesday, May 30, HART, Hillsborough County, and Proterra, Inc. invited transit experts, ADA community, elected officials, local media, and the general public to the presentation and interactive event showcasing Proterra’s Catalyst® zero-emission battery-electric vehicle.

“We are excited to demo these state-of-the-art zero-emission buses along with Proterra, Inc. on our city streets,” said HART Interim CEO, Jeff Seward. “HART continues to consider options to diversify our fleet by testing a range of alternative fuel innovations to greatly reduce our overall carbon footprint while enhancing the safety and comfort of our passengers.”

Currently, HART’s bus fleet has both diesel and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicles. As Hillsborough County’s public transit system, the Authority recognizes its role in making public transportation a sustainable part of our community.

“Thanks to HART for bringing a Proterra, Inc. electric bus to town for a demonstration,” said Hillsborough County Commissioner Pat Kemp. “Electric buses are the future and have many advantages including lower fuel and maintenance costs, zero emissions and a smooth quiet ride.”

“As Proterra technology rapidly improves and continues to deliver reliable, high-performance alternatives to diesel and natural gas-powered vehicles, we are seeing more and more transit agencies across the country transition to 100% battery-electric vehicles,” said Proterra, Inc. Sr. Director National Sales, Michael E. Hennessy. “We look forward to continuing to work with HART and providing the best performing bus technology to contribute to their vision of implementing sustainable and innovative transportation.”

The Proterra Catalyst® 40-foot zero-emission transit vehicles hold up to 40 seated passengers and can travel more than three hours on a single charge. The Catalyst fully recharges in approximately 10 minutes. These electric buses are not just clean and quiet, they have zero tailpipe emissions and enable transit service providers to reduce fueling and maintenance costs while delivering advanced and environmentally-friendly transit option for our customers.
LYNX partners with Lyft in Peak Demand Periods

The Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX) continue its commitment to enhance ACCESS LYNX service options by signing a partnership deal with Lyft, the fastest growing on-demand transportation service in the United States.

The partnership with Lyft has helped LYNX meet the demand of its paratransit passengers during peak utilization periods by enabling passengers to rely on Lyft’s affordable and convenient service. The partnership underscores Lyft’s commitment to ensuring that those who need rides most are able to get them and LYNX’s commitment to investing in innovative solutions for the Central Florida community.

Back in December 2017, the ACCESS LYNX program switched to a mobility management model providing improved and more effective travel options and customer service. All call center functions are now being handled by LYNX staff and to date has provided better program management.

In the first two months operating under this in-house management process, on-time performance has improved from 85 to 91 percent and operating costs have decreased by 50 percent for those customers utilizing transportation network companies.

For customers who can utilize non-ACCESS LYNX vehicles their trips may be provided by bus, taxi and now Lyft. These options will allow LYNX to provide customers the most efficient travel vehicle, more cost effectiveness and increased customer satisfaction. Customers will be offered free travel training to learn how to use the program’s new modes of transportation.

An ACCESS LYNX vehicle tracker app is in development for a 2018 release. This will be similar to the LYNX Bus Tracker app.

MCAT Introduces Mobile Marketing

Starting in April 2018, Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) buses honor mobile ticketing as a new fare payment option for passengers. Mobile ticketing provides a simple, cost effective approach to buying bus passes, using a mobile device such as a smartphone. The one-year pilot program makes available to MCAT passengers the Token Transit software application for the purchase of single ride fares, as well as daily, weekly and monthly bus passes.

With Token Transit, no onboard equipment is necessary and Manatee County Government incurs no equipment or maintenance costs. In fact, this new fare option requires only visual validation by the Transit Operator, which expedites the boarding process. At the same time, passengers benefit from a new fare payment option, which requires no cash on hand or ticket media that might be lost or misplaced; and without a fare transaction required either onboard the bus, or in advance at a Transit Station.

Instructions for downloading the Token Transit “app” and purchasing MCAT single ride fares and bus passes are available onboard MCAT buses, at Transit Stations, and via the MCAT website. Once purchased each mobile ticket provides a countdown to expiration, and includes the current time. The MCAT Transit Operators are aware of these unique “pictures and color of the day” for the screen shot, and this is key to visual validation.

“The MCAT team continually focus on improvements for service delivery operations including new and innovative services, enhancing bus stop infrastructure including over 400 bus stop upgrades to date, and a series of technology improvements that flow from the 2014 Transit Technology Business Plan. The mobile ticketing pilot program is a continuation of these ongoing team efforts, and more transit technology service enhancements are on the horizon. Special thanks to the MCAT team for their ongoing, dedicated service to the community,” said William Steele, Manatee County’s Transit Division Manager.
Over 180 tourism and transit stakeholders attended the sold-out B4 Summit, “Bikes, Bus, Beach + Brevard”, at the Radisson at the Port on January 25, 2018. Cape Canaveral’s Economic Development Director, Todd Morley, kicked off the interactive event by sharing the city’s progressive model of sustainability. “Bikes” speaker Aviva Manin, Account Director for the Bike Share vendor Zagster, stated that Phase 1 of the Space Coast program included 80 bikes at 10 stations throughout Cape Canaveral and Cocoa Beach. Manin said the bikes can be unlocked and rented in 10 seconds by using a smartphone app. ReThink Your Commute’s Courtney Reynolds promoted strategies for safe, stress-free cycling, stating that her goal is to help make Brevard the safest area in the state for bicyclists and pedestrians. “Bus” presenter, Interim Assistant County Manager Jim Leisenfelt, discussed on-going Space Coast Area Transit programs and technology, including upgrading the 321Transit.com website, creating a trip-planning smartphone app, using Facebook Live to promote services, and implementing a program called Ride with Jim to receive input from stakeholders.

“Beach” was the focus of Space Coast Office of Tourism Director Eric Garvey, who unveiled the innovative “smart park” concept slated for Lori Wilson Park in Cocoa Beach. The smart park designation symbolizes a showcase of technological advancements that harness energy from younger and more connected generations, who have become disenchanted with public spaces and the outdoors. Several park technologies he showcased included solar-powered Wi-Fi hot spots that double as shade structures; self-cleaning restrooms; weather sensors; water management systems for splash parks; and drone surveillance systems to monitor ocean conditions, including the presence of sharks. The summit’s “Brevard” element was delivered by County Commissioner and TDC member, Jim Barfield. While addressing the overall state of tourism and transit in Brevard County, he cited both departments as being “the most efficiently run in the entire state of Florida.”

The highlight of the jam-packed B4 Summit was keynote speaker Andrew Evans, a National Geographic Travel Journalist and host of “World’s Smartest Cities”, a TV series that showcases innovation and urban sustainability all over the world. As National Geographic’s first Digital Nomad, Evans spent five years sharing his adventures online in real-time via Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. His assignments for National Geographic spanned all seven continents and five oceans; he has broadcast live from kayak, camel-back, helicopter, and inside King Tut’s tomb, and was the first to blog from the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro. Evans gained a worldwide following with an epic overland journey from National Geographic headquarters in Washington, D.C., all the way to Antarctica, by bus—a 12,000-mile journey through 9 states and 14 countries, and the focus of his keynote speech. Throughout the harrowing ride, including areas of no paved roads and the threat of bandits, Evans made numerous connections with people he met along the way. “What I learned is the world is very small,” he said. “Transit and mobility is about allowing people to have opportunity. While Antarctica may not be their destination, being able to get to work or school allows them to fulfill their own goals and dreams. Smarter sustainable cities invest in mobility options to attract high tech businesses and millennials, tech-savvy, educated employees. Cities who don’t plan for the future will be left behind,” Evans stated.

Following the B4 Summit, attendees traveled to Manatee Sanctuary Park on Space Coast Area Transit buses for a picnic luncheon and Bike Share ribbon cutting. Participants had the opportunity to be professionally fitted with a free bike helmet, test-ride a Bike Share bike, and receive a personally autographed book, The Black Penguin, authored by Evans. “It was encouraging to see the number of stakeholders investing their time in the future of transit and tourism in Brevard County,” stated Jim Liesenfelt. “It’s just one more tool in the box that helps promote transparency in government.”
One of the most fundamental core values of the American dream is upward mobility — that is, the opportunity to climb up the corporate ladder. However, roadblocks can often hinder even the most ambitious employees from progressing. Take Christopher Love for example. Love started out at Palm Tran as a bus driver, and while he enjoyed his job, he wanted to utilize his background in vehicle mechanics. When Palm Tran's mechanic technician trainee position opened up, Love jumped at the opportunity to apply, but he was rejected on two separate occasions. He knew he needed guidance to achieve his career goals, but did not know where to turn. Palm Tran’s Upward Mobility Program provided him with the tools he needed to succeed.

Palm Tran Organizational Development Manager Liliane Finke, Ed.D oversees the Upward Mobility Program, which guides employees in preparing for their next career moves.

“This is a unique program in the transit industry, and it exemplifies how Palm Tran as an employer invests in every employee,” she said.

Finke has a doctorate in education with a concentration in psychology. Her educational background and expertise provided the perfect foundation for the Upward Mobility Program, now entering its second year.

“The Upward Mobility Program allows us to develop our employees’ skills and enables them to achieve career advancement,” Palm Tran Executive Director Clinton B. Forbes said. “The program is an empowering opportunity for Palm Tran employees. It is a way of letting them know we value them, care about them and want them to grow in our company.”

Love said the Upward Mobility Program helped him understand what he should focus on to achieve his career goals. Finke was able to assess his needs along with the needs of Palm Tran and identify areas for improvement.

“There were certifications I needed to get that I did not know I needed. I learned more about what it took to be a more qualified candidate,” Love explained.

Furthermore, the process helped him identify his strengths and weaknesses. Through a series of confidential 30-minute sessions, Love learned the best way to showcase his previous experience as a mechanic at his trucking company. The sessions consisted of coaching in all areas of development.

“We understand the importance of recognizing and utilizing “soft skills,” building a team or going back to school to earn formal education credentials,” Finke said.

She explained that preparing for an interview is not just about attire or following up. It is about comparing an individual’s skills and qualifications to the job requirements. The application is a major component of that process.

“The application itself is the first step,” Finke said. “How it is filled out is often one of the keys to success.”

The third time Love applied for the mechanic trainee position, he was successful.

“It made all the difference,” Love said. “There were too many things I was not emphasizing. I learned how to articulate more in my interviews.”

“The Organizational Development program made a huge difference for Christopher in the third interview. He really upped his game and presented himself as a well-qualified candidate. The difference was night and day,” Jon Kavaliunas, who was on the evaluation panel, said.

Since becoming a maintenance trainee, Love has already been promoted to maintenance technician, a feat he also attributes to the Upward Mobility Program. In the two years of the program starting, six Palm Tran employees have succeeded in receiving promotions to new positions.

Our next newsletter will be out in December 2018. The newsletter is printed in full color, and past copies may be seen on our website at FloridaTransit.org.

To ensure inclusion we must have final copy no later than November 12th.

Rates are as follows:

- Business Card                - $ 75
- ¼ Page - (4” x 5.5”)       - $150
- ½ Page - (8” x 5.5”)       - $275
- ½ Page (Back Fold)         - $325
- Full Page - (8” x 10.25”)  - $400

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The Travel Trainer for Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) is Mr. Jim Van Pelt. As the Travel Trainer, Jim helps people understand at a functional level, how to utilize the MCAT fixed route bus system, thereby providing citizens, particularly those with disabilities, new freedom and independence in their everyday lives. Jim takes the time to understand each person’s individual travel needs, and tailor the travel training program for these specific needs, and in accordance with each person’s functional abilities. There are also situations where Jim can assist a group of people learn how to complete specific bus trips for group events and social outings.

On Wednesday, March 21st, 2018, Jim scheduled a group of eight women from Holy Cross Manor, a senior retirement center in Palmetto for bus travel to Ellenton Outlet Mall. Since it is a training event, Jim showed the group proper procedure for riding buses including: How to read a route schedule, how to pay a fare, when/where to wait for the bus, where to get off the bus, and asking the Transit Operator for help, if needed, etc.

On this trip, the Route 201 (i.e., the North County ConneXion) bus left Holy Cross Manor at 10:10 am. After arriving at the downtown Bradenton Transit Station, the bus turned into Route 1, which went to the Ellenton Outlet Mall. Since November, 2016, MCAT interlined all the Palmetto-area bus routes for improved operating efficiency and system connectivity, and now these routes serve the downtown Bradenton Transit Station. The interlining of Palmetto-area bus routes, makes it was easier for the Holy Cross group to complete their trip, since they did not have to transfer buses.

Arriving at the Outlet Mall at 11:20am, the women scattered, walked around and could be seen travelling in smaller groups all over the mall. The entire group then met at the Outlet Mall bus stop around 2:00 pm for the return trip, leaving at 2:20 pm.

The return trip was quite enjoyable; the Holy Cross resident were happy and gregarious, laughing and talking. It seems the trip to the Mall “pumped them up” and this joy was contagious and seemed to spread to the other people on the bus. The Holy Cross residents were dropped off at the Holy Cross bus stop at 4:10 pm, and while de-boarding, they all thanked Jim for the great time they had.

After the trip, Jim shared with MCAT staff that the Holy Cross travel training event “made me feel like my job is much more than just teaching people to ride the bus. I think it helps people, who were previously stuck in a rut, to get out and enjoy life and make their lives much more fulfilling.”

Way to go Jim!
Vehicle Telematics

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