



October 7, 2009

ADMINISTRATION:

Fall Ridership Update:

Ridership is increasing once again this fall! The average daily ridership this fall is 28,412 compared to 25,596 last year. This represents an 11% increase this fall. To meet this demand, dispatch has put out more extras increasing the peak pull out to 55 buses on some days of the week. In addition, for the first time, night extras are becoming prominent. We're just beginning the evaluation of the first ridership quarter but it looks like a 10-15% increase over last year and not a snow flake has fallen! Thanks to all our employees in doing your best to ensure CyRide customers have a positive and exceptional experience on the bus. Our higher ridership is really a true celebration and reflection of your talents in keeping our customers in their seats.... or standing rather. *"One customer, well taken care of, could be more valuable than \$10,000 worth of advertising."* Jim Rohn (Sheri K.)

Summer Fare Free Analysis: As you know, CyRide surveyed its summer riders to determine the benefits of free fares. Overall CyRide provided 113,258 additional rides (26.7% increase) during the summer fare free promotion. CyRide's short survey completed by 1,211 customers revealed: 20.1% were new riders, 34.2% indicated they rode more and 61.7% supported the program if it were to continue permanently through property tax increases.

The Center for Transportation Research and Education (CTRE) completed an in-depth analysis of a longer statistical valid survey completed this summer of 386 respondents. This Summer Fare Free analysis is now available in CyRide's break room or [online](#).

Staff communicated the ridership, final cost and survey results (including our drivers' survey) to our board at their September meeting and will discuss it with the Ames City Council later this fall. Staff developed four options for continuance of the program for the board to consider including: summer only, weekend/evening, K-12 and year-round. However, the year-round option would not be something CyRide could offer until its capital resources (more buses, larger facility, etc) are replenished as well as additional staffing. The K-12 option was not recommended due to the drivers' opinions on the challenges encountered with these riders. The option that staff recommended to the board to consider and possibly fund within

the budget is the summer only option. GSB representatives indicated they already support free fares for the students and this program would need to be funded between the university and the city. Iowa State indicated that they would not support the continuation of fare free in light of their financial budget concerns and that another year of funding would be up to the city to support. Again, the city council will review the program later this fall. (Sheri K. & Shari A.)

OPERATIONS:

The Art of Moving Back: With our increase in ridership and as the weather gets cooler and cooler, it is imperative to ask our passengers to move back on the bus so more people can board. Making a request to your passenger is an **ART**.

Attention Getter

Request Politely

Thank your passengers for their cooperation

Here are some sample announcements:

"May I have your attention; I have just a few more people to board if you would please move back in the aisle a few steps...Thank you."

"Good Morning, we have a lot of passengers traveling with us this morning if everyone would move back a step or two we will have room for everyone...Thank you."

Morning Orange route drivers should make this announcement **after** they leave the parking lot, so there is room for passengers boarding at Maple Hall. (Jenny and Rob)

Parking Buses Outside during Nice Weather: We are having many buses left outside with the front doors open. When buses are parked outside the front doors should be closed. Please remember to close windows and roof vents also. (Jenny and Rob)

Parking Buses Outside during Cold Weather: When parking buses outside the garage in cold weather, the following procedures must be done:

- Leave the transmission in neutral
- Set the parking brake (do not use the rear door interlock as a parking brake)
- Close all windows and roof vents
- Turn off all interior lights and fans
- Turn off the 4-way flashers
- Close the front door by reaching through the driver's window
- Close the driver's window

When parking a big bus outside and the outside temperature is 20 degrees or below, do not turn off the bus engine. When parking a minibus outside and the outside temperature is 0 degrees or below, do not turn off the bus engine. The high idle and front heat or defrost should be left on all buses. This procedure will prevent the front windows from frosting over and diesel fuel from gelling and clogging both fuel lines and filters. (Barb & Jenny)

Fall Back: Daylight Savings Time ends November 1st. Do not forget to set your clock (or watch) back one hour. Enjoy that extra hour of sleep! (Jenny and Rob)

Stuff the Bus: We are participating in the seventh annual “stuff the bus” promotion with The Iowa State Daily, The Tribune, and KCCQ/KASI. We are encouraging residents to help us “stuff the bus” by donating food to MICA (Mid-Iowa Community Action).

Individuals can drop off their non-perishable food donations at one of the CyRide buses located at both Fareway and HyVee locations, and Cub Foods, October 9th and 10th. (Barb)

Gate Cards in Windows: Drivers, please do not stow your gate card between the two panes of the driver’s window. When the window is inadvertently closed on the card, it causes internal damage (crimping of the card) rendering the gate card useless. (George)

Flu Shots: Flu Shots will be offered at CyRide on **Wednesday, October 14, 2009 from 2:00-4:00pm** in the training room. *(This will only be for the seasonal flu, not H1N1)* Sign up sheets are posted on the bulletin board by employee mail boxes. Please sign up for a time outside your shift if possible. You will be relieved from your run to get your flu shot if you work during this time. (Karen)

Wellness Ambassador: There is an opening on the City Wellness Committee for a CyRide representative. The “Wellness Ambassador” helps to provide employees with the resources, tools and skills to lead healthier lives. More information along with a sign up sheet is posted in the memo by the mail boxes. (Karen)

HIRING AND TRAINING:

Snow and Slide Training: Drivers who started at CyRide after March will be receiving both snow and slide training. Snow training is classroom instruction highlighting proper vehicle handling techniques on ice and snow. Slide training is conducted when weather conditions permit at the Hilton Coliseum (ISC) parking lot. Drivers will attain speeds of 30 mph (or greater) and purposely slide (skid) their bus to experience the “feel” of winter driving conditions. These “skid drills” will help build confidence in your ability to handle anything an Iowa winter can produce. The dispatchers will be contacting you if you need this training. (Tom B and George)

Spring 2010 Run Pick: We will hold Spring Run Pick in early December (after students have had a chance to pick their spring classes.) This is for drivers who will have conflicts with their current work schedule due to spring semester classes. Runs from drivers that have

conflicts as well as all runs that are currently open will be made available in the run pick. You will be able to choose new runs from these available runs. You can only drop runs that conflict with new spring classes. Drivers will choose their new runs based on seniority as of October 31, 2009. (Tom B and George)

Training: Thanks to everyone's hard work helping to get all of our new drivers through training and ready for Fall. We really appreciate all of the work that the instructors have done to help with our additional drivers. (Tom B and George)

FLEET AND FACILITIES

Used Bus Purchase: Over the past several months, CyRide's maintenance department has been working with the Fresno Transit System to purchase buses they plan to retire this fall. Anticipating that this opportunity will occur mid-October, CyRide's Board approved, at the September 2009 board meeting, a not to exceed amount of \$105,000 for the purchase and transportation of buses to Ames. Therefore, we are working toward at least 11 used buses to be brought to CyRide's fleet. CyRide also expects 15 new Gillig buses to be delivered between July 2010 and January 2011.

Our goal is to build a fleet of 17 total buses (12 spare buses and 5 contingency) over the next few years. The contingency fleet will be implemented into service if service fluctuates with little notice. For instance, if peak requirements increase at the beginning of a semester, they would be utilized and brought out of the contingency fleet. Then staff would work during the following year to replace this contingency fleet. The 12 spare buses would accommodate CyRide's daily needs and would achieve the 20% spare ratio recommended by the Federal Transit Administration. (Rich L. & Shari A.)

Satellite Facility: In the September board meeting, staff requested the board's direction toward attaining a satellite facility as CyRide's bus fleet will grow to 76 buses by January 2011 to meet current ridership demand. Only 59 large buses can park within the existing garage. CyRide staff has requested a temporary exemption from ISU in regards to the existing lease agreement, allowing outside parking of buses. However, this is just a short-term solution and we need to provide a long-term plan towards parking 17 additional buses (12 spares + 5 contingency described in the above article) in addition to the 59 we have today.

Through planning efforts conducted last year with a consultant, it was concluded that future growth will not be able to be housed at CyRide's current location. Additional bus storage, maintenance bays and parking were identified as critical areas needing to expand. Staff went through an exercise of maximizing all the available space on the current site and determined that in 3-5 years, expansion would be needed again at our current growth. Therefore a second satellite location to park and perhaps maintain buses will be necessary in the short term. (CyRide will need additional storage next fall when the 15 new buses arrive.) Whether CyRide operates from two locations permanently or identifies a satellite site that could eventually accommodate all of CyRide in the future is the dilemma.

With the site location still unresolved, staff is pushing to identify an 11 acre site to eventually move operations together again. The consultant recommended a site that was 11-12 acres as opposed to the four we have today. Two existing sites have been suggested: CIT property on Ford Street and the Wiley/Blackwell Publishing building on State Avenue. Neither site is large enough to accommodate all of CyRide's future operations. However the Wiley/Blackwell Publishing location could be a possibility if surrounding university land were available. The board recommended that staff have additional discussions with ISU representatives regarding the availability of this property and other suggested opportunities in that near vicinity. The goal is to work towards securing land and begin construction/reconstruction by June 2010. (Rich L., Shari A. & Sheri K.)

Bus Procurement – Mainly Hybrids: In case you were not driving and missed the CyRide radio announcement on October 21st or the memo, CyRide received \$1.6 million in Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) funding to upgrade a diesel bus purchase to hybrid. Of the \$100 million available, CyRide was one of 43 transit agencies around the country to receive TIGGER funding and the only Iowa transit system. Over the next few months, CyRide will be changing our current order with Gillig to mainly hybrid. CyRide previously received Iowa's Clean Air Attainment Program funding for 2 hybrids. Therefore depending on the type of transmission ordered, we can expect to receive 10-12 hybrids from the 15 total buses on order! CyRide will have the largest hybrid fleet in the state of Iowa! (Rich L. & Shari A.)