



January 13, 2012

## ADMINISTRATION:

**Building Construction Update:** CyRide's building needs some attention and it is finally in a position to address some of the issues that have created challenges for the Operations and Maintenance divisions. First, after the flood in 2010, the facility needs further protection from flood waters when the Squaw Creek rises again – and it will sometime. Second, we received the hybrid buses and can only park/move in certain areas of the building. Third, the bus fleet has grown to the point where buses must be parked outside. Fourth, structural issues in the wash bay/lanes 11 and 12 need to be addressed for the long-term.

CyRide has federal/state grants totaling approximately \$4.9 million dollars to address these four issues. This last fall, staff began the process of hiring an architect to design the changes needed to the facility. It is anticipated that the City Council will approve a contract with URS Corporation in January and an initial meeting is scheduled for February. It is estimated that some level of construction work can begin mid-late summer with the flood protection, building expansion and raising of the ceiling as priorities for this construction. When a construction schedule is developed, staff will include this in future signals articles. (Sheri K.)

**CyRide Budget:** CyRide is currently in a less than positive budget period as a result of fuel prices, unanticipated higher property insurance premiums and unstable federal funding. The Transit Board chose to address this year's budget deficit, anticipated to be \$200,000, with fare increases; avoiding service cuts at this time. However, the Transit Board is currently reviewing budget proposals for the next year beginning in July and are looking at service modifications as well as increasing the funding partners (City, ISU and students) local contributions by 7% to try to make up the difference as best it can. The uncertainty right now is in CyRide's federal funding as discussions on budget deficit reductions (which include transit funding) continue. Since the Congressional "Supercommittee," charged with coming up with a plan failed to do this, we have been notified that transit funding is anticipated to decrease next year by 9.1%. For CyRide this means a funding cut of \$142,000 on top of the higher expenses experience with insurance and fuel. It is hoped between now and when it is to take effect a year from now, Congress addresses this issue and we will not see this large of a cut. However if this cut happens, the Transit Board will need to address this budget shortfall at that time. To put this in perspective CyRide is not unique in its financial issues. The American Public Transit Association reported that 80% of urban systems in the United States either have increased fares or cut service in the last year or are planning one of these actions this year. (Sheri K.)

**Intermodal Transportation Facility and Phase II Update:** Contractors have been busy since March 2011 constructing the Ames Intermodal Transportation Facility situated just west of campustown near Hayward/Chamberlain. This new facility will be a focal point for regional transportation in the community allowing connections between Jefferson Lines, Burlington Trailways, Executive Express (airport shuttle) and Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency. The

facility will also house 385 parking spaces as well as public restrooms allowing the public access to the campustown retail district. It is hoped that the facility will spur additional retail development in this area.

CyRide applied for additional grants (TIGER II & TIGER III) for phase two of the facility design, which would allow CyRide to operate a shuttle through the facility connecting with campus and transfer points on campus. The reason CyRide service was not initially included in this facility is that it requires parking revenues from at least 700 parking spaces to support the shuttle system, and with only 385 spaces, CyRide would have needed to put local dollars into operating this shuttle that it does not have. These requests for additional funding were denied.

Phase one of the facility is scheduled for completion in June 2012. CyRide will own and retain control of the facility ensuring any revenues from the facility, beyond operating the facility, will be used to support any CyRide service. To view the construction of the new facility, go to <http://www.fpm.iastate.edu/webcam/intermodal/archive.asp>. (Sheri K.)

**Odyssey of the Mind:** Odyssey of the Mind is coming back to Ames in May 2012. Every three years, thousands of kids, parents, and coaches descend on Ames to compete in a creative problem-solving competition. This year the event will take place at various locations around the ISU campus on May 23-26. Three years ago, CyRide carried more than 80,000 riders to and from the event requiring additional buses and drivers to meet this four day spike in ridership. More information will be shared with employees as the details become available. However, one change being discussed is to have an informational meeting with drivers, put on by the Ames Convention and Visitor's Bureau, so that drivers are more familiar with the event and can help participants get to and from the events more easily. We believe this can be another of CyRide's value-added services to our passengers and hopefully this information will make it easier for drivers as well. (Sheri K.)

**CyRide Website:** CyRide redesigned and launched our website in August 2011 prior to ISU students returning for the fall semester. Since that time, the website designer VISION internet has indicated that CyRide's links via Twitter, Facebook and the e-notification posts and e-mails are unable to post in CyRide's unique design they created. Instead, these posts are coming across with the city image or adding an attached web link with the City of Ames' blue page look which is unacceptable. As a result, CyRide will be separating from the city in the next few months once a contract has been signed. This separation will allow CyRide to have a distinct look, separate from the city. (Shari A.)

**Central Iowa RSVP Transportation Program:** CyRide employees should be aware that Central Iowa RSVP operates a volunteer transportation program to Story County residents. This service provides safe, reliable and affordable transportation to and from essential services for those Story County residents needing rides to in-county medical appointments. However, other rides may be approved and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. For instance, RSVP has recently established volunteers willing to transport women to their maternity appointments at Broadlawns Hospital in Des Moines. The cost for this service ranges from \$3-\$12 in-county or \$0.39 per mile for out of county transportation. This project is funded by United Way of Story County, Story County and the City of Ames. For more information about this program, go to [www.rsvpvolunteer.org](http://www.rsvpvolunteer.org). (Shari A.)

**Civil Rights Policies:** Over the past year, CyRide completed many changes to its Civil Rights programs; specifically our Title VI and Equal Employment Opportunity programs. Overall, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is putting more oversight into these areas to ensure grantees are complying with regulations across the nation.

Title VI: In early 2011, CyRide complied with requests that our regional FTA office had regarding our Title VI program. Changes included a new Title VI policy statement and implementing notification to our customers that we do not discriminate based on race, color and national origin which is a federal regulation. As a result, this statement has been included on the inside advertising racks of our buses and within our transit schedules in addition to our website. Then in April 2011, CyRide had a Title VI compliance review where a federal review team found the following corrective actions. 1) Provide more inclusive public participation specifically to minorities and low-income individuals and 2) Provide outreach to those who are limited English proficient (LEP) and redo CyRide's LEP plan addressing the number of Chinese LEP population in Ames as Chinese is the highest LEP population in Ames. Since that time, CyRide has implemented a telephone translation service, "The Big Word" where customers can request an interpreter if they call in asking information from CyRide. In addition, CyRide has been working to develop relationships with the Chinese community. Specifically, CyRide has attended the YWCA International Woman's Festival where 86 individuals attended. Thirty individuals asked CyRide's representatives about how to access transit. In addition, CyRide invited the Engaging International Spouses coordinator, Jingtao Wang, from the YWCA to join Human Services Council. This group of human service agencies and organizations identifies transportation needs within the community and recommends transit projects for inclusion into the Passenger Transportation Plan (PTP). Any projects that receive grant funding must be identified in this PTP document prior to grant approval from the Department of Transportation and some FTA programs. In addition, CyRide is now tracking its outreach to the low-income and minority community.

EEO Program: CyRide implemented its own EEO policy and program to comply with FTA regulations after it was determined that CyRide could not abide through the city's overall program. This policy states, "CyRide does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed religion, age sex, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, veteran's status or any other mandate prohibited by law." The changes implemented additional oversight and responsibilities to CyRide staff to ensure that discrimination is not occurring in CyRide's hiring, separation, promotion or disciplinary actions for each job classification segment. CyRide must track this data to report to the federal government every three years which is completed by CyRide's Transit Planner & EEO Officer, Shari Atwood. (Shari A.)

## **OPERATIONS:**

**CyRide is #1:** CyRide is now the top transit system in the U.S. for cities with a population under 200,000 in Rides per Capita! **CyRide had 106.0 rides per capita in FY2010.** Athens-Clarke County, GA is second at 103 rides, State College, PA third at 102 rides and Campaign, IL in a distant fourth at 82 rides per capita. Cities like New York and Washington, DC are always at the top with about 120 rides per capita, but we are getting closer. (Tom D.)

**Ridership:** CyRide finished the calendar year 2011 with 5,608,041 passengers. To no one's surprise, the busiest routes were Orange, Red, and Blue.

- Orange 1,654,698
- Red 1,291,324
- Blue 1,104,000

(Tom D)

**Scheduling Software:** CyRide is in the process of purchasing a software program (with help from a State of Good Repair grant) that will create drivers shifts automatically from timetables, assist in the run pick process, print out run sheets, prompt the dispatchers if a shift is open or if a driver does not punch in, and help in the scheduling of requests for time off. There is a web-based component that will also allow a driver to log on and request time off, sign up for an open shift, view their run sheet, check their hours, and many things we don't know yet. We hope to have it installed sometime this summer so we can experiment with it before school starts next fall. After we learn how to use the program properly, the web access will be allowed sometime next fall or spring semester. (Tom D.)

**Automatic Vehicle Locator and Passenger Information Systems (AVL/PI):** One of CyRide's most requested technology upgrades is access to bus information "on the go" via Smartphones. CyRide is currently soliciting vendors to purchase vehicle tracking software to track fixed route buses in real-time and reporting information to the dispatchers and the public via an automatic vehicle location device. Initial funding for this project will come from Iowa State University (ISU) student fees.

We are also looking at the option of LED and LCD signage that would integrate with the vehicle tracking system. These signs would be at bus stops and would display arrival predictions of bus routes. The thought is to purchase two signs for use on campus with the initial procurement. (Barb N.)

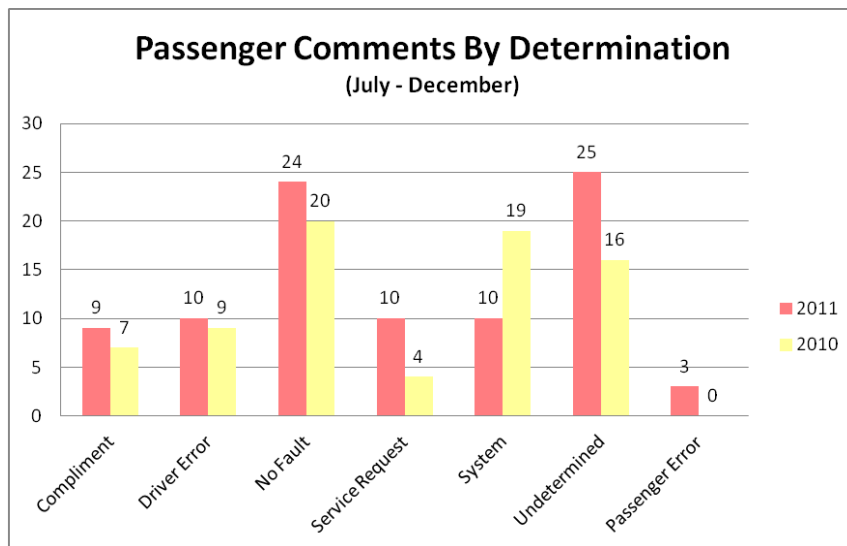
**Interior Temperature of Your Bus:** As the weather continues to stay cold we should talk a little about the interior bus temperatures. All buses heat differently providing more heat to some areas than others. Drivers should frequently walk through the bus to monitor the temperature of the passenger seating area as well as referring to the interior thermometer. During winter, drivers will maintain their passenger compartment temperatures between 65-68 degrees F. This insures that passengers in winter clothing do not become uncomfortable. If the heater does not raise the temperature to this comfort range, the dispatcher should be notified. (Jenny B. and Rob H.)

**Tough Snow Warning:** When curbing your bus, be on the lookout for the piles of accumulated snow that will exist at the edges of the street. The freeze-thaw cycle and road chemicals will turn this once fluffy material into something akin to concrete. Adequately survey the situation when stopping and ensure there is enough room between your bus and any snow. Hitting a frozen snow bank is a preventable accident. Striking this glacier-like substance damaged several mini-bus step wells last year. (Jenny B. and Rob H.)

**Parking Buses Outside in Cold Weather:** As a reminder, when the outside temperature is 20 degrees F or colder, keep your diesel bus idling when parking it on the curb or in the employee lot. You should shut off the 4-ways and auxiliary heater (webasto), but keep the heater and the front windshield defrosters on to prevent window fogging. This procedure will prevent diesel fuel from gelling and clogging fuel lines and fuel filters. (Jenny B. and Rob H.)

**Accident History to Date Comparison:** There have been 42 collisions since July 2011, the same number as the previous year. Preventable accidents are up by one - 31 this fiscal year compared to 30 last year. Most collisions continue to be at CyRide with 26 this year compared to 23 last year. The one thing that has changed is the dollar amount of damage to buses, dropping from \$26,419 in the first six months of last year compared to \$16,438 this year. (Tom D.)

**Customer Comment History to Date Comparison:** Between July and December, there were 91 total Customer Comments compared to 75 in 2010. The breakdown of how those were determined is shown on the chart below. Of those considered to be Driver Error in 2010; 3 were for driving, 2 were for passed passenger, 1 was for rudeness, and 3 for service quality. In 2011 the Driver Error comments were; 3 for driving, 3 for rudeness and 4 for service quality. Of the 16 additional comments received in 2011 the biggest increases were in the Undetermined (9), Service Request (6), No Fault (4), and Passenger Error (3). All passenger errors were due to their watch times being off from the official time. (Karen J.)



**Winter Driving Tips:** We've all heard the saying "there are two seasons in Iowa – road construction and winter." Most years it seems that way. Iowa's snow season typically runs from November through early March.

The following tips will help in reducing the chances of becoming involved in a weather-related accident.

- \* Report for work rested and alert.
- \* Do a thorough pre-trip inspection. Make sure you have de-icing fluid, an ice scraper, and window cleaner.
- \* Slow down. The posted speed limit may **not** be a safe speed to travel at during inclement weather. Remember safety before schedule.
- \* Give yourself more stopping distance, about 15-20 feet before where you would usually stop. Bridges and shady spots can be icy when other areas are not. Avoid sudden stops and quick direction changes.
- \* Turn off the transmission retarder if the bus is equipped with one.

Snow and ice create hazards for our passengers as well. The following tips can help reduce the chances of our passengers having an accident.

- \* Turn your four ways on early so the passenger knows you see them at the stop.

- \* Approach the stop cautiously and allow extra clearance on the right side, if necessary.
  - \* Choose the boarding and deboarding area carefully. If there is snow at the bus stop, select another area such as a sidewalk or driveway. If the sidewalk is icy or snow covered, give the passengers warning of the condition before they exit. If there is not a clear location keep a clearance of three to five feet from the snow bank so that passengers can use the street for boarding and deboarding. Do not move the bus until all people are safely away from the bus. Check your mirrors carefully to make sure the area is clear.
  - \* If your bus steps are snow or ice covered, scrape/brush the snow/ice off these steps.
  - \* Monitor the interior temperature of the bus for the comfort of the passengers.
- (Rob H. and Jenny B.)

## **HIRING AND TRAINING:**

**New Instructors:** With the students on semester break and a majority of the buses in the garage, six drivers took the opportunity to enroll in the Instructor Training Program offered over the holiday break. This group participated in classroom sessions and on the road training. We want to welcome and congratulate Adam Duke, Andrew Teply, Ed Noveshen, Mallory Parmerlee, Kirk Langas, and Charles Pyke on their completion and new positions as New Driver Instructors! (George S. and Tom B)

**The Glam on Grit:** Grit is not to be applied to the steps and aisles of CyRide buses to prevent passengers from slipping. Grit can only be applied outside your bus to improve passenger and bus traction at slick bus stops. Grit causes severe damage to wheelchair lift/ramp mechanisms and bus flooring, and is considered an inhalation hazard when used inside buses because of its silica content. Drivers will need to be extra careful in preventing the buildup of snow and ice on steps and aisles. Frequent use of your ice scraper and brush to clear snow from these areas will prevent passengers from falling. (George S. and Tom B)

**Winter Safety Reminder:** Drivers, if you should run over an object that could or has caused harm or damage to your bus, please stop your bus immediately and inspect it for damage. Stopping your bus immediately will prevent further damage from occurring. As always, keep the dispatcher informed of your condition and status. (George S. and Tom B)

## **FLEET AND FACILITIES**

**Hybrid Update (Off Throttle):** CyRide is currently testing two styles of hybrid braking. The two systems are an electric pneumatic pedal and an off-throttle system. Both are being evaluated in an effort to determine if a 20-25% fuel economy improvement can be achieved with the hybrid systems. The off-throttle system has been installed on four buses (418, 419, 429, 430) for a limited, four week trial. Drivers who regularly drive these buses have been individually briefed on the nuances of the off-throttle system. When evaluating the hybrid systems, we will look at safety first, then the fuel economy to determine the best course of action for the long-term. *For those that crave technical knowledge please continue reading....*

All hybrids have a Wabco electric/pneumatic brake pedal installed; the purpose of this pedal is to allow the driver to be able to slow the bus using the brake pedal without using the



foundation brakes (brake pads) and reclaim energy at the same time. To reclaim energy the hybrids have an electric motor that can be spun forward and backwards. Spinning the motor backward creates energy that is stored in the capacitors above the bus and when the energy stored in the capacitors is released it spins the electric motor forward creating force to assist the main diesel engine. The first inch of movement in the Wabco pedal is the electric sensor portion of the pedal. The electric sensor controls how much force the electric motor applies to assist in stopping the bus. The sensor works in a linear fashion, meaning the further you push the pedal into the first inch the more force the electric motor will apply to slow the bus. After the first inch of travel in the brake pedal the bus brake pedal will function like every other brake pedal in the fleet by using the mechanical retarder and foundation brakes.

The electric brake pedal alone is the configuration we have been testing since August, but now Voith has asked us to try the off-throttle braking to help maximize the amount of energy reclaimed. Off-throttle braking has the characteristic of apply a slowing force with the electric motor as soon as the accelerator is not being used. *Off-Throttle has been installed on only four buses (418,419,429,430); the other 8 hybrid buses brake the same way they have since August.* With off-throttle the bus is reclaiming energy with a consistent force every time the driver is coasting or coming into a stop. This system will not allow the bus to coast without losing speed. All major hybrid manufactures other than Voith (and #296 the Toyota Prius) use the off-throttle braking method of reclaiming energy. Voith has set the current force of the off-throttle approximately equal to that of an Allison hybrid bus. Remember when driving to still cover the brake.

The other update Voith has done is a software upgrade to help smooth out rough shifting and the blending of the electric motor, mechanical retarder and foundation brakes. All hybrid buses have had this shifting software upload done. (James R.)

**New 40' Standard Diesel Bus Delivery Schedule:** CyRide will receive eleven new 40' Gillig low-floor buses in 2012. All buses will be standard diesel buses. Six will be delivered in late January or early February and five buses will be delivered after July 1, 2012. A number of driver recommended changes will be incorporated into this order (see July 2011 memo) including increasing the amount of adjustment in the driver's seat and the return of sliding passenger windows.

For the second group of five to be delivered later in the year, we are considering Twin Vision destination signs again. The manufacturer has assured us deficiencies with the current signs have been corrected. They are also offering a 10-year warranty on the signs, which is unprecedented in the industry. Please give James or Rich your opinion on your preference of destination signs. We are also considering switching to electric engine cooling fans to improve fuel mileage. (Rich L. & James R.)

**Articulated Bus Purchase:** Prior to October 2011, CyRide was leaning toward purchasing the next generation of New Flyer articulated buses, known as the Excaliber model. The 40' Excaliber model has been out for over a year now, but New Flyer kept experiencing delays in launching the articulated version of it. During a bus trade show in October, there was an opportunity to take a closer look at the Nova Bus articulated model. Based on the initial positive assessment, Nova brought a demo articulated bus to CyRide the week of Thanksgiving and most employees preferred the Nova bus over New Flyer.

Given the preference for the Nova Bus model, CyRide started the procurement process with the company. A preproduction meeting will be held in February and two new Nova articulated buses will likely be delivered in late August or September 2012. (Rich L.)

**Maintenance Accomplishments:** The shop and lane workers have been hard at work over the past few months. Here is an update of major projects that have been accomplished over winter break by the maintenance crew.

- Renumbered all buses (over 550 numbers applied) to make the buses more identifiable by employees. The first number will indicate what type of vehicle it is within the fleet. The last two numbers will all be unique to each bus.
- Removed, stripped and recovered all bus seats that required it in the 950 series and 2 1999 Gillig Lowfloors (150+ seat and back panels).
- Changed passenger stop request signal operation in the 2008 and 2010 Gilligs. The two options are Multiple or Single Chime (reset option has been removed).
- Replaced the bottom driver seat foam on the Orion VII's.
- Replaced farebox and window fare decals to reference \$1.25 fare change.
- Replaced the driver's seat in minibus 338.
- Cleaned 32 of 33 shelters around Ames.
- Cleaned 40 bus interiors (with help from drivers). (James R.)

**BREAK ROOM COMMITTEE CHIRPS AND CLIPS:** (Eric Ollie, Ray Coffey, Ed Noveshen, Brent Klooster, Barbie Hoskin, and Joanne Van Dyke)

**Holiday Party Thanks:** The Breakroom Committee would like to begin by thanking everyone who attended the Holiday Party. Each of you helped in some way make this event a success. We enjoyed catching up with current and retired CyRide employees. A special thanks goes out to Yvette, Ed, Eric and Joanne for cooking/smoking the turkeys and pork loins.

**Leap Day Chil-oup Partyganza:** Many crock pots and tripped breakers later; we believe this to be the 12<sup>th</sup> year for this event so the committee decided to host a **CyRide LEAP DAY CHIL-OU P PARTYGANZA** (aka **CyRide's Annual Soup Day**) **Wednesday, February 29**. Please join other co-workers by making a batch of your favorite chili recipe (other soups welcome too) and share with CyRide employees. If soup making is not your forte, there is always the need for other food items to complement the soups. (Chips, lunchmeat, bread, buns, fruit, salad, desserts, and I might mention cookies.) The committee realizes this falls in the middle of the week and it is not the normal "Monday" soup day, but it is Leap Year so let's celebrate this extra day! You can prepare your chili on the weekend and let the flavors steep until Wednesday. Thank you to the original members of the Breakroom Committee for launching this event. Additional details will be posted in February closer to the event.

**Employee ROADEO:** Another event in the planning stage is our CyRide Employee Rodeo. The official date has not been set, but Nathan Shimanek will spear head this employee ran event and is looking for volunteers to help. Last year, several employees participated by showing off their driving skills, judging the event, cooking, and of course eating. Nathan hopes more employees will participate this year. The goal is to pick a day of no rain or wind; perhaps we should have held the Rodeo in January on one of those record-breaking 60-degree days!

**New Breakroom Committee Member:** CyRide's Breakroom Committee welcomes a new member, Ed Noveshen. Thank you for serving as a member of the committee. **You have heard this many times, but the Breakroom committee always is looking for additional members, suggestions, or ideas.**