



Charlotte Growth is Dramatic

Many of our systems have had great years in ridership growth. Perhaps the latest gasoline price drop will cool the increase, but Charlotte served 40% more customer trips in July, 2008 than the prior July. This is the highest rate in 60 years. The Blue line contributed excitement and almost 17,000 daily riders. Revenue rose 87%, express bus rose 45% and total bus riders were up 14%.

Regional Transit System Training Center Opens at VOTRAN

A regional training facility at Votran's headquarters in South Daytona opened Oct. 3. The Regional Training Center offers advanced training opportunities to transit agencies while reducing the time commitments and travel costs associated with specialized training. Drivers and mechanics from Florida's transit systems can come to Votran for state-of-the-art training. The project is a partnership between the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Votran and will serve transit agencies primarily in central and northeast Florida.

The multi-year development of FDOT's second regional training center included the modification of a Votran building for classrooms and training space. FDOT provided the training equipment, including an operations training simulator, and assisted with the development of the curriculum. Votran, in coordination with the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), will do a baseline evaluation of the safety and training programs and monitor benefits in the future. Maintenance training modules including and engine cradle and other on-board systems are also included.

Economy Changes, Markets Volatile

The month of October, 2008 goes into the record books as one of the most difficult for pension funds, banks, and those who rely on them. To put the month in perspective, the total DJIA loss was 1,525. The eight day losing streak was the longest since 9/11. The value of the month total decline was \$2.5 trillion. The volatility was severe. The DJIA rose or fell more than 100 points each day but three. Four days of the month were the best or worst single gains or losses in history. The election brought more volatility to begin the month of November. Perhaps one of the most important trends is that stock or equity mutual funds gained \$2.2 billion in deposits in the week ended November 5, 2008, the first growth since July, 2008. (USAT 10.31.08, Bloomberg 11.06.08)

FWTA Celebrates 25 Years of Service

November 8, 2008 is T Day in Fort Worth. Since 1983 the Fort Worth Transportation Authority has grown by more than 3 million riders per year during that period. To thank residents, employees and the communities it serves for helping to make public transportation successful in Tarrant County, The T will launch a year-long celebration. Community anniversary activities include:

- 1) Roll-out of a six-month Text-to-Win contest with participant prizes; and
- 2) Announcement of the winner of a 25-year premium transit pass randomly selected from among Text to Win participants.

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION



Bloomington Cuts Service Gains Riders

The budget process was difficult at the BPTC this year, as in many of our systems. Despite the 2% service cut that was part of the decision making, ridership this September grew 14% over last September. The 6 Campus Shuttle and 9 IU Campus/Campus Corner routes are now over 65 riders per hour. The total of all route productivity is now over 42 riders per hour. The fastest growing route, in relative terms, is the 2 West 11th/South Rogers. It increased 31% in twelve months.



Biodiesel Use Grows

Our systems have experimented with different concentrations including the more common B20. The results have a similar tendency. The quality of the fuel is always important as is the fuel sampling method. But the B100 that goes into the B20 should be tested against the new ASTM specification. The result of many first users is the fuel filter replacement increase. Either fuel system clean out or fuel quality problems can cause fuel filter changes.

Even trains are testing the use of biodiesel. The South Florida TriRail test is expected to grow the mixture to B99. Currently the data reflect lower cost per gallon (\$.30) and lower efficiency (7%). (Metro 10.29.08)

FWTA, Arlington, and Oxford Riders Grow

The early results in Arlington for the express service to Fort Worth are exciting. The one year pilot project in Arlington includes service from the I30 and I20 corridors to Fort Worth. Before the end of October, the express trips had hit 550 per week.

In Oxford, MS the OUT system surprised observers reaching 191 riders on Saturday, October 25, 2008. The rapid start for the four route system included at least one standing room only trip. Congratulations to our client, and thanks to the hard work of Tim Lett.

VOTRAN Drivers Travel More Than 30 Million Safe Miles

How many years does it take to drive one million miles? Just ask one of Votran's 34 drivers who have done just that. Votran has 30 drivers who have reached the one million safety milestone, and another four drivers who have driven two million accident-free miles. It takes a Votran fixed route driver about 12 years to drive one million miles. Evett "Doc" Wilson was the first Votran driver to accomplish the achievement of two million safe miles. Bernard Huggins, Nathaniel Flynt and Paul Garrigan also have driven two million miles without an accident. These four drivers showcase Votran's excellent safety record. Congratulations to Doc Wilson, Bernard Huggins, Nathaniel Flynt, and Paul Garrigan.



President Elect Obama

Senator McCain was gracious, President elect Obama was inspiring, and the crowds were jubilant. Congratulations to our new leader.

Perhaps the most important comment of the evening came from a Texas farm east of Austin. Amanda Jones simply told the reporter that the election news was a "blessing". Ms. Jones did not think she would live to see her vote count in this way. Ms. Jones has lived to see enormous changes in her 109 years. Until 1966, Ms. Jones was required to pay a toll tax before she was permitted to cast her ballot. Her father was counted as 3/5ths of a person for electoral college decisions until emancipation in 1865. (NPR 11.05.08)

Even Southwest Guessed Wrong

The ability of Southwest to beat other airlines has become legend in business schools. The customer service and employee stock ownership were integral in the early years.

Through the last decade, the strength of the airline has included careful and precise fuel hedging against soaring costs. To hedge, a company uses market trends to predict the direction of costs and then buys contracts in the future at prices that have not yet risen. Southwest also had the advantage of more cash to use for hedges than the other competitors. The bubble burst as fuel prices dropped rapidly. Spot prices have now dropped more than 50% from the peak in July. By October 17, 2008 crude oil stocks in the nation had risen to 311.4 million barrels, reflecting a rapid five week increase. (EIA 1.22.08)

The firm reported to the SEC that the value of the fuel derivative contracts dropped from \$5.1 billion at June 30, 2008 to \$2.5 billion at September 30, 2008.

Changes in Engine Technology

Our systems are among the nation's leaders in alternative fuels with fleets that use CNG, LPG, hybrid drives, or B20. There are many other motor technology changes around the corner. Most of our diesel fleets take advantage of the compression ignition design, high compression ratios, direct fuel injection, and turbocharging. Some of our gasoline powered vehicles take advantage of variable valve timing. It may not be long before the cylinder deactivation from light duty engines makes it into our medium duty vehicles. The next changes could include turbocompounding, used in large Detroit, Scania, and Volvo rigs. Or the next change could be ethanol boost. Ethanol has disadvantages as a primary fuel, but as a booster injected into the combustion chamber, it offers vaporization attributes that lower the fuel air temperature and increase fuel efficiency up to 30%.

The next level of improvements may come from the research pioneered at the Nippon Clean Engine Research Institute. In 1978 they invented the homogenous charge compression ignition engine. The engine offers the potential advantages of both traditional gasoline and diesel engines: high compression and evenly mixed fuel air charge. The 1978 effort stopped due to engine computers of the era not being up to the need. The current engine control systems offer the promise of HCCI becoming efficient and inexpensive. (PM July, 2008)

Chicago Launches Joint Smart Card

The CTA has approved a joint card for transit users that CTA and I-GO tout as a new chance to change the landscape of potential users. The I-GO drivers rent cars by the hour, and often ride transit for trips in between. Anyone who has tried to use transit to shop for a family's groceries could see the appeal of the one trip a week car rental.

On the Ballot

The election for president took the attention this month, but there were important transit elections also. In the Seattle region voters passed Proposition 1 which authorizes a new 0.5% sales tax for increasing express bus service by 17%, increasing Sounder commuter rail by 65%, and building 36 miles of new light rail to Lynwood, Federal Way, and Overlake.

It was a difficult election cycle for a new \$107 billion program, but as the Municipal League of King County said: "While we have misgivings about using the sales tax to finance these improvements, it is the only mechanism approved by the state legislature for this purpose. ...We have already waited long enough for these investments. We recommend support for Proposition 1." As of November 5, this vote appeared to pass.

Also on the November election ballot were the Kansas City Light Rail, \$815 million, 3/8th cent sales tax; the \$17.8 billion initiative that includes 34 miles of light rail; and the Los Angeles subway to the sea project. The preliminary results indicate the Kansas City vote failed and the Los Angeles vote passed.

And there will be debate over another stimulus package at the federal level. This package may include a significant investment in transit infrastructure. Be prepared with those bus specifications, and building plans.



California Passes Complete Streets

The law, now passed and signed by the governor, was introduced by Mark Leno of San Francisco: "...AB 1358 will ensure our roadways are safe and convenient for everyone-young or old, riding a bike or on foot, in a car or on a bus." The law requires the local government general plan to identify circulation for motorists, pedestrians, children, seniors, cyclists, transit users and ADA users. Most observers think the requirement will lead to a faster rate of implementation for sidewalks, bike lanes, safe crosswalks, bus pullouts, and audible pedestrian signals. If each of these features is designed in, the cost is more efficient than later retrofit.