



DESTINATIONS

Destinations is the official newsletter of the Regional Public Transportation Authority

Vol I Issue III, Summer 1993

Multi-modal Ideas Inspire ADOT's New Director

Viewpoint

"What we need to do in this State is craft a vision for the 21st Century," says newly appointed Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Mary E. Peters.

"We need to be thinking multi-modal. And, in a partnership effort, we must develop long range plans that consider our transportation for a minimum of the next twenty years," Mary adds.

Her chief objective as ADOT's newest director include being more accountable to the citizens of Arizona. She wants to provide them with a transportation vision and acquire a stable funding mechanism. The funding effort will soon be vital to the agency as thirty percent of ADOT's funding comes from a source that expires in 2005.

She issues a challenge that won't be easy or simple to meet, but is sincere with her commitments. Setting goals and achieving them is not new to ADOT's new chief.

Skills To Excel

Mary began her career with ADOT just prior to the voter approved Proposition 300, which gave the agency the funding it needed to develop larger-scale projects for a growing state. She was hired as a secretary in Consulting Services, but her boss knew she had the skills to excel as the agency grew. In mid-1995 she was named Deputy Director for both the Administrative and Operations divisions. Earlier this year, Mary took over as ADOT's Director, which seemed like a natural progression. Was it difficult climbing the ladder of an agency managed mostly by men? "Yes, in some ways," she says. "It may have been harder, but it was and is doable. You must establish credibility." She acknowledges that not being an engineer was even tougher than overcoming the obstacle of being a woman. Mary chose to overcome that theoretical roadblock.



Mary E. Peters, Director

"If you do your homework by researching and staying on top of things, you will gain credibility because you offer validity and evidence of your opinions."

Developing Alternatives

Reflecting on past experiences, Mary states that participating in Governor Symington's appointed Alternative Transportation Systems Task Force was a pivotal experience. The group's focus was to improve alternatives to the single occupant vehicle in an effort to relieve traffic congestion and improve air quality.

"Through this group, I met a lot of individuals in the alternate modes arena and became familiar with how important it is for continued and improved mobility," Mary says.

"I'd like to see us (ADOT) become a 'transportation' agency with multi-modal efforts, not just be considered a 'highway' agency," Mary states. "We can no longer rely on highways as an exclusive system of travel in Maricopa County. I'd like to see us establish transit corridors that will accommodate high-speed buses and possibly rail."

According to Mary, she'd like to first build out and accelerate the current freeway system to a maximum configuration. Then she wants to use the additional capacity to develop other options that would support alternative modes. "We need to look at this area as a region, not a composite of cities in order to be successful," she adds.

Next, she envisions establishing five key transit corridors in the Phoenix area for future transportation development: the northwest Valley; I-17 corridor; Scottsdale/N.E. Valley; southeast Valley (Tempe, Chandler); and the Mesa area.

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RPTA's New Chairman Speaks Out



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Before the next 12 months have run their course, let us make every conceivable effort to provide a regional, seamless Dial-A-Ride (DAR) service.
Mayor Rimsza

In July, Phoenix Mayor Skip Rimsza takes his turn at the helm of the Regional Public Transportation Authority's Board of Directors for the next 11 months. In this role, he will guide regional transportation efforts for member cities and towns and Maricopa County.

Rimsza was elected as mayor in 1994, then again in 1995 for a four-year term. His philosophies on developing the future of Phoenix tie in with further development and enhancement of transportation in the region. His goals are to renew neighborhoods; expand the economy and protect families. Mobility is important to the success of all three goals.

"I am tremendously excited to be the new Chairman for RPTA," says Rimsza. Although he realizes that there are many challenges in the coming year, there is one area where he'd like to focus his efforts. For the past six months RPTA and member agency staff have been working on a Board-directed plan examining the viability of regionalization of the DAR system. Currently, varying DAR systems exist in the Valley that present a confusing array of transportation choices for passengers. "Staff has done an excellent job laying the groundwork for us to get this done, so now it's up to us to finish the job."

While not performing endless mayoral duties for the citizens of Phoenix, Rimsza leads a very active life at home with his wife and five children.

Among the five are a set of triplets who just turned two years old.

To 'get away from it all' Rimsza returns to Alaska each year for a hunting expedition, where he and his brother served as guides in his earlier days. And, in his spare time, the Mayor likes to restore old cars and trucks. Perhaps you've seen him drive down the streets of Phoenix in his yellow '56 Ford pickup. □



Mayor Rimsza inspects the clean burning LNG fuel system.



Mayor Skip Rimsza kicked off the American Public Transit Association (APTA) Conference in Phoenix last May with the unveiling of the first of 156 liquefied natural gas (LNG) buses. Delivery will be complete this fall.



Serving as replacements for aging diesel buses, the new LNG buses are low floor and easily accessible for persons with disabilities.

Transit Funding Moves into the 21st Century

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, or "TEA 21" was signed into law by **President Clinton** on June 9. This will provide for the funding of federal surface transportation programs for the next six years at \$217 billion.

A few highlights of TEA 21:

Funding flexibilities for transit have been retained and TEA 21 will provide \$42 billion over the six years of the act, this by far exceeds previous federal funding for mass transit.

The Transportation Enhancements (TE) program has been reauthorized in TEA 21. Initial estimates indicate that annual TE apportionments will average \$630 million annually. The Enhancements categories have been modified to now include safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Jobs Access and Reverse Commute Grants are being funded at \$750 million. The purpose of the program is to 1) develop transportation services for transporting welfare recipients and low-income individuals to and from jobs, and 2) develop transportation services for residents of urban centers and rural and suburban areas to suburban employment opportunities. □

A First for Arizona HB 2565 —New Transit Bill—

"The bill is
a home-run

for our local
jurisdictions
and a
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state for

jurisdictions additional transit monies and the ability to leverage these state funds against federal funding for additional project development.

Ken Driggs, Executive Director of the Regional Public Transportation Authority says, "The bill is a home-run for our local jurisdictions and a stronger

commitment from the state for transit." Driggs also adds, "We should all applaud the tireless work of Representative Steffey and the leadership of the Arizona Transit Association."

Legislation earned on one front can be taken away on another. Concerned for years about dwindling lottery revenues and problems within the administration of the State Lottery, legislators passed HB 2158 that places on the November ballot, a measure to do away with the lottery. Arizona cities and towns, the Heritage Fund, and many other current worthy programs including transit, are funded through lottery revenues. Programs driven by these monies face extinction or severe cutbacks should voters say "no" to the lottery in November. □

On Friday, May 29 Governor Hull signed into law **HB 2565** allowing for a approximately \$8 million in new transit funding statewide. The bill, authored by State Representative Lela Steffy (R-Mesa), is the first major transit funding mechanism of its kind. Because the bulk of excess state revenues flowed into school capital finance and tax-relief programs, funding for other worthy projects was scarce this year. Also, previous attempts at funding transit through lottery or Powerball revenues have consistently come up short. A new and innovative way of funding transit with state sources was needed.

Enter Representative Steffey, a longtime champion of public transit. Along with her support, Arizona Transit Association (AzTA) President John Anderson and Executive Director Jim Shipman were able to craft legislation that used higher than expected federal transportation act revenues to trigger state vehicle license tax (VLT) monies for transportation and transit purposes throughout the state. The net effect holds harmless existing highway and freeway projects while giving local

Valley Residents "Air" Opinions and Commute Behaviors

RPTA contracts with West Group Marketing Research to conduct a survey that measures participation in and reactions to the trip reduction and Clean Air Campaign programs. Here are a few results according to the 1998 survey.

- Nearly 60% of residents have taken action to try to reduce air pollution as a result of hearing about it.
- Fourteen percent of all ridesharers use an alternate mode exclusively, which is up from 11 percent in 1995.
- Valley workers using an alternate mode (carpool, bus, bike, walk,



telecommute, or compressed work week) at least one day a week is 43%.

- The number of employed individuals who telecommute has increased by 368% the past five years going from 19,000 to more than 90,000.
- The number of alternate mode users has increased by 60% (or 208,000 Valley commuters) since 1993, while the number of employed people in Maricopa County has increased by only 37%.
- Alternate mode usage in the Valley the past year has resulted in 76,200 fewer trips being made, which translates into a savings of 5.8 million fewer miles traveled each day and 29,250 tons of pollution from being emitted.
- The number one suggested change for an increase in alternate mode usage is an improved transit system.

A complete report of the survey is available by contacting Valley Metro at (602) 262-7433 and asking for the 1998 Clean Air Campaign and TRP Annual Survey. □

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Multi-modal Ideas Inspire ADOT's New Director

"We need to look at purchasing a transportation corridor so that we have the opportunity to build solutions."

In addition, she wants to link other areas across the state so travelers and tourists can quickly and easily reach some of the state's most popular areas. Links would include north to the Grand Canyon, west to Los Angeles, south to Tucson and beyond.

Planning the Future Together

As far as local planning goes, she defines ADOT's relationship with RPTA. "Although it's courteous, I'd like to see us working more closely together on long-range plans for both regional and statewide efforts," she states. Why statewide? She believes local tie-ins, such as bus connections with statewide alternate mode systems, will be vital for the mobility of travelers.

Public opinion of ADOT has not always been favorable in the past, but the new director feels they have turned a corner and have put negative sentiment behind them. ADOT generates reports establishing costs and revenues of the transportation system twice each year for the public to review. In addition, the agency has been able to meet and exceed delivery dates of accelerated highway projects. All in all, she feels their integrity is being restored.

"We are one of the hot spots of highway construction in the country, and that gives us a certain prestige we can all be proud of," she adds.

Mary has clearly defined the next steps that are needed to meet the challenges she has set before her staff and herself. "The first thing we need to do is build more public support for public transportation. We need to educate, inform and involve others. Next, we need to plan so that we are not taking away future opportunities. Third, I'd like to form a long-term partnership group of key transportation people for developing the long range transportation plan."

She hopes to get this group together in the next 12 months so discussion can begin on how to establish the next wave of transportation funding before this one expires.

As far as immediate plans, she hopes to encourage a safer working environment for all ADOT employees by promoting the importance of awareness at all times.

She also realizes that decisions made now will definitely impact all of us who plan a future in Arizona.

"I realize the economic impacts mobility can make. Transportation directly affects quality-of-life too and I want to see my family stay here," she adds. □

1998 Clean Air Campaign Awards

Clean Air Campaign Honorary Chairman
JOHN LEWIS

Outstanding Clean Air Program (Public)
STATE OF ARIZONA TRP

Outstanding Clean Air Program (Private)
THE SALVATION ARMY
WAL-MART (Tie)

Leadership Award
Transportation Coordinator
LORI SINGLETON, SRP

Leadership Award (Public)
REP. ED PASTOR

Leadership Award (Private)
ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE

Leadership Award
Community Organization
ACT VALLEY OF THE SUN CHAPTER

Blue Sky Award
Public Education
PARADISE VALLEY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Blue Sky Award—Beyond TRP
SALT RIVER PROJECT
MARICOPA COUNTY &
A TO Z EQUIPMENT

Blue Sky Award—Beyond TRP
LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

Blue Sky Award—Telecommuting
CITY OF GLENDALE

Blue Sky Award—Compressed
Work Week
ACOUSTIC IMAGING TECHNOLOGIES

Golden Shoestring Award (Public)
CAPITOL RIDESHARE

Golden Shoestring Award (Private)
COSTCOWHOLESALE

Creative Excellence Award
Promotional Material
LUKE AIR FORCE BASE

Creative Excellence Award
Promotional Event
CITY OF TEMPE

Golden Spoke Award (Public)
CITY OF MESA

Golden Spoke Award (Private)
ALLIED SIGNAL, AES

Friendly Facilities Award (Public)
CITY OF TEMPE

Friendly Facilities Award (Private)
NORWEST BANK, ARIZONA

MAG "Feet First" Award (Public)
CITY OF TEMPE

Media Award—TV
KNXV-TV

Media Award—Print
THE TRIBUNE

Media Award—Radio
DAN BEACH, SKYVIEW TRAFFIC

Special Recognition Award
BASHAS

Special Recognition Award
ARIZONA DIAMOND BACKS

Special Recognition Award
TOSCO MARKETING COMPANY

Special Recognition Award
SPORTS AUTHORITY

Special Recognition Award
REP. CAROLYN ALLEN

Special Recognition Award
REP. ROBERTA VOSS

Special Recognition Award
ARIZONA BICYCLE CLUB

Special Recognition Award
BOB AND DICK LANDIS
LANDIS CYCLERY

Special Recognition Award
MARICOPA COUNTY
SRP



Clean Air Luncheon Honors Organizations & Individuals

More than 200 leaders from Valley businesses, government and civic groups gathered for the 1998 Awards Luncheon at the Ritz Carlton Hotel on June 19 to recognize outstanding efforts in the Clean Air Campaign and Trip

Wal-Mart was honored for its Outstanding Clean Air Program which included educating children about the solutions to air pollution.



Channel 15 news anchor, Robin Sewell, drives SRP's EV-1 to the Awards Luncheon.



John Lewis (left), Clean Air Campaign Chairman and President of MicroAge Integration Group, was presented with a Special Recognition Award by Bill Kicksey, Maricopa County Environmental Services Manager.



Allied Signal received the Golden Spoke Award for its comprehensive commuter bicycle program.



Calendar of Events

Dates to Remember:

- July 21** Regional Bicycle Task Force; Maricopa Association of Governments; 302 N. 1st Ave.; 1:00 p.m. Ocotillo room
- July 28** Transportation Review Committee; Maricopa Association of Governments; 302 N. 1st Ave.; 10:00 a.m. Saguaro room
- September 21** Phoenix/Glendale Major Investment Study Open House to present findings and discuss progress of second phase. Glendale Community College Student Lounge; 6000 West Olive Avenue (59th Avenue/Olive); Presentations given at 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- September 22** Phoenix/Glendale Major Investment Study Open House; Phoenix Public Library—Metrocenter; 10050 Metro Parkway East; (East side of Metrocenter next door to the movie theatre); 11:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Presentations given at 11:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.
- October 1 & 2** Livable Cities Conference, Phoenix: Do your streets look, feel, and act like places for people? If the answer is "no" then this conference is for you. For more information call Maureen Mageau-Decindis, Valley Metro, 534-1814

Destinations is available on audio tape and in braille. If you know of anyone who might be interested in receiving *Destinations* in either format, please call RPTA's Lillian Duarte at 534-1937. *Destinations* is the official newsletter of the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA). It is published with a circulation of approximately 6,000 copies. We welcome your letters, comments and suggestions.

The RPTA is a political subdivision of Arizona overseen by a ten-member board of elected officials, and was created by voters in 1985 with the passage of Proposition 300. Membership is open to all municipalities in Maricopa County and to the County government.

The mission of RPTA is to promote the social and economic well-being of the community through an efficient and effective regional transit system as a valued and significant component of the transportation network.

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The RPTA wants *Destinations* to address transit in a way that meets the needs of its readers. Please take a moment to give us your recommendations for future issues of *Destinations*, or you may e-mail us.

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