



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Jim McElroy

Executive Director

SolTrans, 311 Sacramento St., Vallejo CA 94590

707-553-7224

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SolTrans is Formed to Provide Transit Services for Vallejo and Benicia

Vallejo, CA - On Friday, July 1, 2011 Solano County Transit (SolTrans) officially took over the public transit programs from the cities of Vallejo and Benicia.

SolTrans was formed in November 2010 to build a unified public transit system in southern Solano County. The first step happened Friday, combining Vallejo Transit, Vallejo Runabout, and Benicia Breeze.

Vallejo Transit has seven routes in Vallejo and four intercity routes to BART and several Solano County cities. Runabout operates ADA paratransit for persons with disabilities who are unable to use fixed route service. The Breeze operates fixed route dial-a-ride and flex route services. The riding public will not see any service changes in this initial consolidation.

SolTrans has a six member Board of Directors with four City Council members from Benicia and Vallejo and two members from regional planning agencies boards of directors, MTC and the Solano Transportation Authority (STA). On the official transfer, SolTrans Board Chair and Vallejo Mayor Osby Davis said, "Our work is paying off. We are saving money, maximizing our opportunities for funding, and holding off service cuts. We will be looking for every opportunity to keep service at good levels. We are setting high standards and want the best transit service. SolTrans is our chosen path."

According to SolTrans Executive Director Jim McElroy, "Hundreds of actions needed to occur to make the transition. On July 1, 2011 all the contracts for bus service were consolidated under a single agreement with the private company that provides our transit drivers and bus maintenance. Operations from three bus facilities were moved to our single large bus base in Vallejo." McElroy noted that, "In the first year alone, SolTrans will save over one million dollars over operating systems independently. That does not mean there will not need to be a thorough review of all services. But, it does help keep more service in a time of declining resources." MV Transportation, headquartered in Fairfield, California, is the private company now under contract to SolTrans to provide bus service. MV Transportation has 85 drivers operating over sixty buses for SolTrans. The combined systems will initially carry 1.5 million riders annually.

The next big step for SolTrans is to develop a five year budget and operations plan. According to McElroy, "We will be diving right in with our riders, the general public, and anyone interested in good public transportation. Our Board wants a sustainable plan that can really have a positive impact on the lives of our residents. One good example is the recent delivery of a fleet of new hybrid-electric buses that will soon hit the streets. These buses will save money, provide excellent service, all with increased mileage and much lower emissions. These are the kinds of things our communities expect and we want to deliver."

For further information, contact Jim McElroy at (707) 553-7224.

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