

Votran

People Movers

Spring 2012

We drive a great bargain

Votran recognized for innovation, safety, marketing efforts by transit association

Votran earned multiple honors at the annual Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) conference held in Tampa. Votran's sustainability programs, Go Green - Go Votran, received top honors as the most innovative project. This award honors an FPTA public transportation system member that has demonstrated innovative concepts or effective problem-solving techniques not applied previously in the public transportation industry.

"Votran is honored to receive this award," said Votran General Manager Ken Fischer. "Public transportation itself is a green initiative but we took it a step further with green business practices. The benefits to the environment and to the bottom line make it worthwhile."

Votran bus operator John McDermott was recognized as second runner-up in the Florida Operator of the Year category. Votran also earned a second runner-up safety award.

"Votran is one of a few transit organizations across the southeast with so many safe miles driven by its bus operators," said Fischer. "Our safety goes beyond the roads and into our maintenance facility, where our crew works hard to work safely."

The marketing efforts of Votran were recognized in FPTA's marketing awards competition. Votran earned two second-place awards of merit. One in the bus exteriors category was for the Bernard Huggins safe driver campaign, and the other was in the audio/visual/television category for a television spot promoting expanded trolley service along Beach Street and S.R. A1A in Daytona Beach. The spot featured local business owners and customers along the route.

This competition is open to any Florida transit system that is a member of FPTA. All the prize-winning entries were created by Volusia County Community Information.

The Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) is one of the most active state transit associations in the nation. FPTA is a nonprofit association whose members include every major public transit agency in Florida and interested citizens and businesses. FPTA's membership is composed of 28 fixed-route systems, a commuter railroad, a heavy-rail commuter system, and two people mover systems. Many members also conduct paratransit operations to meet ADA and state requirements.



A message from the General Manager

With gas prices soaring, an increasing number of people are turning to Votran. There's a direct correlation between the price of motor and Votran's ridership. The stress point seems to be somewhere around \$3.25-\$3.50 per gallon. When fuel prices reach this point, an increasing number of people take the bus.

The rapid rise in the price at the pump is evidence of how public transportation in our community basically is a social service. Unlike New York and Washington D.C. where people ride transit because of traffic congestion and a lack of parking, here most people ride Votran because they don't have the financial means or the physical ability to drive themselves.

The Volusia County Council recognizes the significant role Votran plays in our community. Without public transit, many people wouldn't have a way to get to work, the doctor or the grocery store. The challenge for Volusia County Government, of which Votran is a core service, is to provide adequate public transit funding within a very constrained budget.

Votran's costs, like those of its riders, are rising. We're paying more for fuel too. We at Votran are doing everything possible to manage our costs for the benefit of our riders and the taxpayers who help to subsidize this service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth Fischer".

Kenneth Fischer
Interim General Manager



KUDOS FOR INNOVATION, SAFETY

Ken Fischer, Votran general manager, accepts award from Jay Goodwill, FPTA

Volusia's people mover – Votran – moves more people

Votran ridership has increased for the fourth consecutive year. For the fiscal year ending September 30, fixed route ridership reached nearly 3.4 million, roughly 4 percent higher than the previous year. West Volusia ridership jumped 14 percent.

“In a tough economy, residents and visitors have continued to recognize the value of public transportation,” said Votran General Manager Ken Fischer. “With the stall in the economic recovery, gas prices continue to fluctuate and economic conditions took a toll on employment.”

During the county's last fiscal year, Votran recorded more than 3.7 million boardings on all services. Ridership in west Volusia increased significantly to more than 512,000 trips, a 14 percent increase over last year.

Votran offers bike racks on buses, and there were approximately 86,000 boardings with bicycles. Nearly 28,000 boardings on the fixed route service were wheelchair boardings.

“It's important to note that all of our vehicles are wheelchair accessible,” said Fischer. “Fixed route bus features like ramps, kneeling at stops and announced routes make the buses accessible to many people with disabilities.”

The New Smyrna Beach Flex service started last October with an average of 47 trips per day in the first month. By the year's end, ridership increased to an average of 69 trips per day. After providing 19,300 trips during the first 12 months,



MORE PEOPLE MOVED BY PUBLIC TRANSIT
Votran fixed route ridership in west Volusia jumps 14 percent

fewer than seven complaints were received.

“We are very proud of the smooth transition into Flex service in southeast Volusia,” said Fischer. “The increase in ridership indicates the service is better meeting the transit needs there.”

Votran's Gold service paratransit vans transported more than 250,000 people. Americans with Disabilities Act trips increased 1.2 percent. Votran's combined on-demand trips increased 10.5 percent over the previous year.

The Volusia County Council created Volusia County's public transportation system in 1975. McDonald Transit, a transportation management firm based in Fort Worth, Texas, contracts with Volusia County

to provide the system's management. The Votran family of services includes fixed-route bus service, beachside trolleys, express bus commuter service, dial-a-ride paratransit service and commuter assistance programs.

The 27 transit routes extend approximately 640 route miles, providing service in a county that is just over 1,200 square miles. Standard daily service runs from 6 a.m. - 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday with limited fixed-route service on Sunday and at night. The frequency of most routes is one hour, with a few operating on the half hour. Service is provided seven days a week, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.



Hop on.

Save precious fuel, money and headaches with Votran, Volusia County's public transportation system.

AROUND TOWN
Ride all day for only \$3.
Discounts for kids and seniors...bike racks for everybody!

COMMUTERS
I-4 Express Bus – gets you to work and back painlessly.
VanPool – You could qualify for a van for your group

Go Green. Go Votran.

866.610.RIDE

votran.org





We drive a great bargain

A service of Volusia County Government

Rider spotlight



Name: Marie Mayo, Daytona Beach
Profile: Marie has been using Votran since moving to Volusia County in 1985. She uses the service for her main transportation.
Quote: “I'm thankful for the service of Votran and have watched it grow over the years. The drivers are friendly.”

Votran hosted transportation conferences add to area economy

Votran is bringing another meeting home to Daytona Beach. Votran's assistance with the Triple Crown Rodeo and the Transportation Disadvantaged Conference last year were followed by the announcement that the 2012 Florida Public Transportation Association annual conference will be at the Ocean Center.

"It has been more than 10 years since this event was held in Volusia County," said Votran General Manager Ken Fischer. "We expect more than 200 transit industry professionals and government representatives. Many of them will come from out of state. Over four days, those attending are expected to stay at least 400 room nights."

Last year, Votran hosted the inaugural Triple Crown Rodeo in Florida, a combination of three statewide competitions -- the Paratransit Rodeo, Fixed Route Rodeo and Mechanic Competition. More than 240 contestants and 100 vendors from all over Florida converged on Votran's headquarters in South Daytona. It was the highest attendance in the history of any rodeo. The Triple Crown Rodeo's estimated economic impact on the area was \$103,000.

Also last year, Votran and the Ocean Center hosted the 19th Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Best Practices and Training Workshop (aka Transportation Disadvantaged Conference). The conference was followed by the Transportation Disadvantaged Commission's business meeting at the Daytona Beach Hilton.

"Organizers were pleased that attendance surpassed previous events with 240 people staying more than 480 room nights



VOTRAN PLAYS HOSTS TO STATEWIDE CONFERENCES
Attendees like these generate revenue for area hotels, restaurants and shops

over three days," said Fischer.

The meetings are part of the county's efforts to bring a meeting home. The "Bring a Meeting Home" program is based on the premise that participation helps the whole community.

"We are appealing to the civic pride of our business people with the hope they will help us attract more meetings and convention business," said Don Poor, Ocean Center director and a 30-year veteran of the conventions industry. "Ocean Center bookings generate the sale of room nights and a great deal more. When residents redirect

meetings here from other cities, they contribute to the vitality of the tourism industry. They are hometown heroes."

With an active and vital business community in Volusia County, so many people belong to professional, fraternal or civic organizations and attend out-of-town meetings and conventions. "Hosting meetings and conventions locally affects businesses of all kinds, not just hotels and restaurants," said Poor. "We are asking people to recommend the Ocean Center as a location for one of their organization's meetings."

County Council adopts Votran's long-range public transit development plans

Votran, in coordination with the Volusia Transportation Planning Organization (TPO), has developed the 2012-2021 Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update and the 2012 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) Update. The 10-year TDP is a strategic guide for public transportation in the community. The plan represents the transit agency's vision for public transportation in its service area during the 10-year period. The TDSP identifies the transportation needs of the elderly, individuals with lower incomes, and individuals with disabilities.

The TDP is required by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to

qualify for state Public Transit Block Grant Program funding, which helps to fund transit services in Volusia County.

The TDP includes an assessment of the current operating environment for the transit system, the existing service being provided, an evaluation of existing and current transit needs in the area, and a plan to prioritize and implement future projects and services based on available and projected funding. The plans were developed with a wide range of community participation opportunities.

To view the plan go online to: votran.org.



Votran's mission is to identify and safely meet the mobility needs of Volusia County. This mission will be accomplished through a courteous, dependable and an environmentally sound team commitment to quality service.

950 Big Tree Rd.,
S. Daytona, Florida
386 756-7496

Votran.org

Votran Gold sets the standard in paratransit service

Residents who cannot use regular fixed route buses have a valuable option: *Votran Gold*.

Votran Gold is a door-to-door, shared-ride paratransit service that serves a specific local population and caters to their unique transportation needs.

Advance trip planning allows *Votran* to schedule vehicles to pick up and deliver passengers with special needs to specific locations. This shared ride service involves picking up and dropping off passengers along the way.

Votran Gold is sponsored by a number of government programs and targets residents who live within three-quarters of a mile of an established *Votran* bus route, but who cannot use *Votran*'s fixed route services due to a disability. Transportation-disadvantaged individuals who live in areas where fixed route service isn't available also qualify. Persons whose trips are funded by an agency that enters in a negotiated contract with *Votran* also can use *Votran Gold* service.

Votran Gold provides approximately 900 daily trips throughout Volusia County and transports passengers to medical appointments, employers, retail establishments and recreational facilities. *Votran* uses 32 of its vehicles and 23 vehicles from private contractors.



GOING FOR THE GOLD

Votran Gold service operates 900 daily trips throughout Volusia County

To learn whether they qualify for *Votran Gold* service, residents must complete an application and review process. Once the rider is approved for *Votran Gold*, trips can be scheduled by calling *Votran*'s

reservation staff at least one day before the trip. *Votran Gold* service is available from 6 a.m. - 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday, with limited service in the evenings and on Sundays.

Votran green efforts save some green, reduce emissions

The payback on nine 35-foot Gillig low-floor hybrid fuel buses is starting to be tallied. *Votran*'s hybrid fixed route buses, funded by \$8.4 million *Votran* received from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, are environmentally friendly, earning a 15 percent increase in fuel efficiency.

"While we still are measuring the returns on the hybrid technology investments, we have seen some positive results," said Rick Kazawitch, director of maintenance. "The mileage achieved per gallon of diesel fuel is 3.9 miles, and the miles traveled per gallon of hybrid fuel is 4.5 miles. Fuel savings over the life of the bus is \$100,000 based on a cost of \$3.55 per gallon for diesel."

Votran management points to fuel economy and air quality as two considerations of hybrid technology. Hybrid vehicles reduce carbon emissions and are more efficient than traditional diesel vehicles. The manufacturer of the Gillig hybrid-diesel model claims the vehicles decrease emissions by 25 - 35 percent over traditional diesel vehicles.

Hybrid vehicles have a minimum vehicle life of 12 years/500,000 miles. They offer a premium pay back of about nine



GOING GREEN NETS GREEN

Hybrid buses net 15 percent fuel efficiency, cleaner emissions

years through savings on brake life, fuel costs and mid-life engine rebuilds. When stopping or decelerating, vehicle energy is converted to electrical energy and stored, with a longer brake life.

The hybrid vehicles are just one component of *Votran*'s Sustainability Project that was recognized last year by the Florida Public Transportation Association as the most Innovative Transit Project in the state.