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SEPTA Receives Gold Recognition Level for Sustainability

Fourth Public Transit System to Receive this Honor

The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) recognized SEPTA today for its sustainability achievements by presenting SEPTA General Manager Joseph Casey with the Gold Recognition Level of the APTA Sustainability Commitment program. Public transit agencies and businesses that participate in this program on a voluntary basis make a commitment to putting processes and actions into place which allow for continuous improvement on environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

“SEPTA is only the fourth public transit system to achieve the Gold Recognition Level,” said King County Metro Transit General Manager Kevin Desmond, who serves as the Chair of the APTA Sustainability Committee and presented the award. “SEPTA is a national leader in sustainability, and employees and riders should be very proud.”

The three other public transportation systems that have received the gold recognition level are: TransLink (Vancouver, BC), Intercity Transit (Olympia, WA), and Sound Transit (Seattle, WA).

SEPTA was a founding signatory of the Sustainability Commitment program in 2009 and has since put in place a full-scale sustainability program that has significantly reduced its environmental footprint. These gains led SEPTA to achieve gold level recognition from APTA, the highest level that public transit systems have achieved so far for significant reductions in areas such as energy, water use, and waste.

In addition to having the second largest hybrid-electric bus fleet in the United States, SEPTA achieved a 19.7 percent reduction in water usage per passenger miles traveled (PMT); a 10.0 percent reduction in fuel use per PMT; a 4.0 percent reduction in electricity use per PMT; and 3.6 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions per PMT.

SEPTA was recognized for many notable projects, including the implementation of the Wayside Energy Storage program, which is both a cutting-edge strategy to reduce energy consumption and an innovative revenue-generating opportunity. SEPTA and Viridity Energy, a Philadelphia-based smart grid firm, have implemented a pilot project to develop wayside energy storage technology to capture, store, and reuse electricity generated from regenerative braking on trains on the Market-Frankford Line. With more than \$250,000 in annual energy savings, this program could be replicated at additional substations.

“Through this pilot project, SEPTA will become even more energy efficient, which will help control operating costs -- benefiting both customers and taxpayers,” said SEPTA General Manager Joseph Casey. “We’ve made our system cleaner, greener, and more efficient in recent years through such efforts as replacing traditional diesel buses with diesel-electric hybrids and installing energy-efficient lighting at stations, facilities, and offices. These measures are helping us control costs in tough economic conditions and making us a better neighbor in the communities we serve.”

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The American Public Transportation Association (APTA) is a nonprofit international association of 1,500 public and private sector organizations, engaged in the areas of bus, paratransit, light rail, commuter rail, subways, waterborne services, and intercity and high-speed passenger rail. This includes: transit systems; planning, design, construction, and finance firms; product and service providers; academic institutions; transit associations and state departments of transportation. APTA members serve the public interest by providing safe, efficient and economical transit services and products. More than 90 percent of the people using public transportation in the United States and Canada ride APTA member systems.