



news release

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MATBUS kicks off Try Transit Week by unveiling a new name/logo/tagline, highlighting partnerships and discussing future innovations

Fargo, ND (October 18, 2010) – The streets of the F-M area will be abuzz with a new look for the community's fixed route transit system. Announced today at a combined media event with Fargo and Moorhead elected City leaders, transit officials, university administrators and members of the business community, Metro Area Transit's fixed route operations will now be referred to as MATBUS.

A new logo, designed by MATBUS administrative staff, was unveiled to the media and the public this morning. The logo is designed to adequately reflect an organization that is modern and looking forward to the future. To convey that MATBUS is a part of the nation's overall transit network, it features a prominent 'M' that is consistent with logos used by other transit systems across the country. To further its commitment to be environmentally-friendly and passenger-focused, MATBUS' new tagline will 'Go Green – Ride with Us!'

Fargo City Commissioner **Mike Williams** and Moorhead City Council Member **Diane Wray-Williams** unveiled and introduced the new logo/name/tagline. Two of the 2010 New Flyer 35-foot buses, purchased with 100% American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, were wrapped in the new MATBUS artwork and showcased at the event. They also encouraged area residents to give transit a try. Williams announced that fixed route ridership in Fargo is 29% higher in 2010 than in 2009 and said that Fargo will introduce two new hybrid 35-foot New Flyer buses to the community in early 2011. Wray-Williams discussed the many new MATBUS technology innovations, including automatic vehicle location (AVL) technology and kiosks, Rider Alerts and public announcement systems. She also noted that MATBUS will be debuting a new website within the next few months and be a participating agency in Google Transit within a year.

Tim Vangerud, Sanford Health's Safety & Security Director, touted the success of the transit partnership between Sanford and MATBUS. Since its inception in 2008, the M3TRO Program has encouraged employees to use transit instead of driving their personal vehicles to work, alleviating parking shortages in downtown Fargo. Sanford Health pays for its employees' bus passes and MATBUS provides travel training, trip planning and Program administration for the participants. Participation in the M3TRO Program has grown to almost 100 participants. MATBUS looks forward to teaming with more area businesses to sponsor similar programs and further encourage transit ridership in the F-M area.

Prakash Mathew, Vice President for Student Affairs at NDSU, and **Shawn Anderson**, Executive Dean of Students at M | State, discussed the importance of the U-Pass Program to the area's universities. The MATBUS U-Pass unlimited ride program reaches students at NDSU, M | State, MSUM and Concordia College, and faculty/staff at NDSU, MSUM and Concordia. The ease of use is a large factor in the increase of transit ridership for college students; they simply swipe their valid college ID in the farebox on board the buses. Riding MATBUS also makes college more affordable, as the cost to owning/operating a car is estimated to be \$9,502 per year (source - American Public Transportation Association). In 2009, college students made up 57% of the total passengers riding the MATBUS fixed route system.

Mathew also noted the importance of MATBUS in the success of NDSU' downtown campuses by providing front-door transit services for students, faculty and staff members. Route 33 debuted in August of 2009 to provide transit services between the main NDSU campus & R.H. Barry and Klai Halls. During its debut year, Route 33 had a total ridership of 233,983 students, making it one of MATBUS' highest ridership-generating routes.

Shawn Affolter, Student Government Vice President at NDSU, stated that MATBUS staff is very involved with NDSU administrators, student organizations and NDSU Student Government members to promote transit and improve services in any way possible. He noted that MATBUS staff attend all student orientations and instill a culture of transit within students from the first moment they step foot onto campus. Affolter, a frequent MATBUS rider, touted his positive experiences riding the buses and discussed the huge success of MATBUS' marketing campaign on the NDSU campus for the 2010-11 academic year. The 'Two-Ten in Twenty-Ten' (210 in 2010) Campaign features 210 actual NDSU students, faculty and staff who ride MATBUS; the ads are showcased in print, online and on billboards. Affolter also noted that MATBUS was the first transit agency in the region to feature pages on Facebook and Twitter and offer SMS/Text Alerts; MATBUS will soon launch sites on Flickr and YouTube as well.

The media event is the first of many MATBUS-sponsored activities during its Try Transit Week, which began on Monday and runs through Saturday, October 23rd. Anyone can ride the bus for half-fare, just 60 cents, all week long! Area residents are encouraged to visit matbus.com for the schedule of events.

MATBUS is the largest rideshare program in the area, offering 25 fixed routes in Fargo, Moorhead and West Fargo, in addition to Paratransit services. In 2009, a record 1.93 million rides were provided on the MATBUS system. There are almost 90 MATBUS employees, which includes administrative staff, bus operators and technicians.

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