



## **MATBUS and NDSU to Host National Transit Conference**

**FARGO, N.D. (June 15, 2012)** – For the first time in their collective histories, Metro Area Transit (MATBUS) and North Dakota State University (NDSU) will host the American Public Transportation Association's (APTA) 2012 Public Transportation and University Communities Conference, June 16-19. This national conference is expected to bring almost 150 attendees to Fargo.

The purpose of the conference is to study and analyze the unique needs of university communities and the populations they serve. From land use development to marketing, this conference promises to bring transit, university and student leaders to Fargo to exchange ideas and see the successful collaborations between MATBUS and North Dakota State University.

Following a competitive review process, Fargo was chosen as the host of this conference because of its strong and successful transit partnerships with NDSU. **Julie Bommelman**, Transit Administrator for the City of Fargo, states, "We consider it a privilege and a unique opportunity to host a conference of this caliber in Fargo. The ever-increasing importance of transit will be showcased during this APTA conference."

The Small Urban and Rural Transit Center (SURTC) of NDSU is a conference co-host. **Jill Hough**, Program Director & Advanced Research Fellow for SURTC, states, "APTA is the premiere organization representing public transportation interests across the nation. SURTC has been fortunate to have a long-standing involvement with APTA and MATBUS. This conference is a wonderful opportunity to showcase MATBUS and the extraordinary relationship they have with NDSU."

**Gregg Schildberger**, Transit Planner for MATBUS, states "Hosting an APTA conference is a tremendous honor for MATBUS and our entire community. We extend a warm welcome, to the Fargo-Moorhead community, to our guests from APTA and transit agencies across the United States."

"I applaud MATBUS and NDSU for hosting the conference, which will provide a forum to share practices in planning, implementing, and operating campus transit service," says American Public Transportation President and CEO **Michael Melaniphy**. "College and university public transportation contributed to a tremendous surge in public transit ridership in the first quarter of this year. I especially commend MATBUS, whose service has grown significantly, boasting over 2.1 million riders annually, making university transit a vital and integral part of the regional transit service."

MATBUS is the largest rideshare program in the area, offering 25 fixed routes in Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo and Dilworth, in addition to MAT Paratransit door-to-door services. In 2011, MATBUS provided a total of 2,159,697 passenger rides. The operation of MATBUS requires a \$6.5 million annual investment and 104 employees, which includes administrative staff, bus operators and technicians.

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