



Media Contact: Angele Young Boutte
504-215-0478 | ayoung@RTAforward.org

Press Release

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RTA awarded \$7.2M FTA grant to purchase 19 new buses

(New Orleans, LA)—Today, Alex Z. Wiggins, CEO of the New Orleans RTA announced a \$7,246,315 Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant award to fund 19 new 35-foot biodiesel buses. This award is part of the FTA’s Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, which makes federal resources available to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment. The program also allows for construction to bus-related facilities including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities.

“Providing reliable, safe transit options to our riders is a paramount priority of the New Orleans RTA,” said Alex Z. Wiggins, CEO, New Orleans RTA. “This grant award will not only better connect our riders to the places they live, work and play, these new buses will also help us improve service in communities where increased access to transit is most needed, like East New Orleans and the West Bank, while also reducing our carbon footprint with low-emissions vehicles.

“Today, we are one step closer to the RTA Board of Commissioners delivering on our promise to deliver a world-class transportation system for our riders and those who advocate on the rider’s behalf,” said RTA Chairman, Flozell Daniels. “We are committed to continuing this work to expand and improve transit service in a manner that helps to build healthy, prosperous and equitable communities.”

“Maintaining and upgrading our transit infrastructure has been a priority of our transportation work, in collaboration with the RTA. Since taking office, we have helped guide the leadership transition, supported RTA’s efforts to ensure a high-functioning management structure, and met the needs of our residents by improving and increasing routes and times --- as we recently did for Algiers and New

Orleans East,” said **Mayor LaToya Cantrell**. “I’m proud to say that this is the second bus grant that has been awarded during my administration, after I personally told U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao how important a high-quality bus fleet is to New Orleans. We are laser-focused on ensuring our bus fleet is sufficient and sustainable so that we can continue to expend service and improve accessibility for all of our residents.”

This federal funding is provided through Fiscal Year Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Program 5339(b). In addition to the this \$7.2M award the RTA has also committed \$2,415,451 in required matching funds which are derived from the local 1-cent sales tax dedicated to public transit.

This funding for 19 new buses is in addition to the 8 buses that were introduced into RTA service in October 2019 and funded by a 2015 Obama’s Administration’s Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery VII (TIGER) grant award. And, another 15 buses, slated to enter service in 2020, which were funded by a Fiscal Year 2018 \$6.4M FTA grant award to acquire 40-foot biodiesel buses.

The RTA is responsible for operating transit services in metro New Orleans, bringing commuters to their jobs, students to their schools, and people to entertainment, shopping, and restaurants. The RTA system currently includes five streetcar lines, 34 bus routes, and two ferry routes, plus paratransit services. The RTA moves more than 19 million passengers throughout the system every year. This includes the St. Charles Streetcar Line, the systems most highly traveled line and the longest continually operating streetcar in the country, founded in 1835.

To learn more about RTA, visit www.RTAforward.org.

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