



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

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The entire bus fleet of Staunton, Va., will be replaced with eight new diesel buses under a grant made today by the U. S. Department of Transportation.

The Federal grant of \$106,755 will cover half of the costs of the new 32-passenger air conditioned transit coaches, according to Secretary of Transportation John A. Volpe. The remaining costs will be paid from general funds by the City of Staunton. The Federal grant will be administered by the Department's Urban Mass Transportation Administration.

An additional UMTA grant of \$35,585 will be available to Staunton after the city meets its full regional planning requirements. This will bring the Federal share of meeting the city's transit needs to \$142,340, or two-thirds of the \$213,510 project cost.

The city will turn over the funds to the Staunton Transit Service, which the city has owned since 1947. In addition to operating eight city transit buses, STS also operates seven school buses for the Staunton School Board. An unusual feature of the school bus system is that paying adults are permitted to ride along school routes.

Staunton, the birthplace of former President Woodrow Wilson, has one of the lowest transit fare rates in the nation, with adults paying 15-cents and children and students riding for only a dime. But rising labor and maintenance costs have forced the city to seek Federal aid to replace their aging bus fleet.

Buses now in use range from 19 to seven years of age. They have frequent break-downs and repairs for many are difficult to obtain. The eight new buses will require substantially less operating and maintenance costs.

Six of the old buses will be sold for an anticipated \$3,000. Two others will be retained for use on new trial routes to sections of Staunton not currently receiving bus service, including Stuart, Maple and Green Streets.

"We are pleased to help Staunton buy their new buses," commented Secretary Volpe. "The purchase is part of our overall program to aid small towns and communities as well as major cities."

Administrator Carlos C. Villarreal of UMTA said he was "particularly pleased that we are able to make such a significant impact by changing Staunton into a first-class transit town almost overnight."

Staunton is located between the Blue Ridge Parkway and the George Washington National Forest near the West Virginia border.

For further information, contact the Public Affairs Office at UMTA, (202) 426-4043, or:

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