



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION

NEWS

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20590

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 28, 1976

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UMTA 76-49

Robert E. Patricelli, Administrator of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) today announced a \$15,687,267 grant to the Bi-State Development Agency, St. Louis, Missouri, for the purchase of 200 new diesel-powered, air-conditioned buses and other related equipment.

The UMTA Administrator noted that this was the "largest single UMTA grant ever given to the St. Louis bi-state area."

"This grant will assist in financing the replacement of almost 25 percent of the buses in Bi-State's fleet, resulting in improved transit service for the system's 62 million annual riders."

Patricelli commended local transit officials on the "significant increases in ridership," totalling more than 10 million additional riders over the past two years. "This is solid evidence of the effectiveness of local initiative and support for public transportation," he said.

The rising patronage of the region's public transportation system is due in part to a ½ cent State sales tax passed in 1974 to help maintain the low fares and improve service on the system. Other factors influencing the growing ridership include service improvements and extension of routes under the area's comprehensive transit improvement program.

The 200 new buses are scheduled replacements for an equal number of buses manufactured from 1952 to 1961. The old buses are becoming more unreliable and maintenance costs are rising.

"Should the project be approved, the Western New York Construction Industry Coalition for Economic Recovery, hereby stipulates that it will serve in the capacity as an Advisory Committee to work with UMTA, the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority and others in a liaison role as is deemed necessary to complete the project in the most cost-effective and expeditious manner.

"Composed of representatives of the Building Trades, the contractors, and representatives of the appropriate professions, the Advisory Committee will be available for pre-bid conferences for the purpose of providing expertise on cost savings and for providing other assistance beneficial to the avoidance of cost overruns.

"We--the undersigned--further stipulate that we will be fully responsive and responsible for our commitment in principle to assure that there will be no work stoppages nor lockouts, during the term of the project.

The UMTA Administrator and his key staff met in Buffalo on May 10 with Congressmen, local officials and community spokesmen to review Buffalo's proposal for a new rail transit system. During those meetings the Administrator reviewed UMTA's policy on major urban mass transportation investments and suggested consideration of an agreement in advance of construction of the proposed transit system between the unions and contractors for peaceful resolution of any labor disputes without costly work stoppages.

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