



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NEWS

URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ADMINISTRATION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20590

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UMTA 73-94
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Secretary of Transportation Claude S. Brinegar today announced an Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) grant of \$5,356,000 to the Central Ohio Transit Authority, (COTA), of Columbus Ohio to aid in the purchase of the privately-owned Columbus Transit Company, (CTC), 31 new 53-passenger, air-conditioned, diesel buses and other transit equipment. Acquisition of CTC follows completion of an UMTA funded technical study which prepared a transit development program and appraised the assets of the transit system.

"Today's action preserves yet another of the nation's vital transit systems" Secretary Brinegar said, pointing out that Columbus becomes the Nation's 112th City in which public transportation has been preserved or stabilized as a result of Federal help.

The CTC system, although well-run and maintained, suffered extreme losses in ridership over the past several years. Despite a decline in revenue passengers, service was maintained and routes increased. The typical trend of reduced patronage and rising operating costs resulted in the ultimate decision by the company to support public acquisition of the system.

UMTA Administrator Frank C. Herringer noted that an affirmative referendum vote by the citizenry of Columbus and Franklin County earlier this year makes

continuation of public transportation possible. Some of the proceeds of the property tax levy will be used to provide the 20 percent local share of the \$6,695,000 total project cost. The tax funds also may be used to cover any operating deficits.

The 31 new buses will be used to improve services on thirteen new or extended routes and will provide access to new regional shopping centers and developing areas.

"A significant feature of Columbus' mass transit improvement program is better service to health care centers and senior citizen complexes, and the inauguration of a half-fare program for senior citizens during the off-peak hours," Administrator Herringer said. Also, COTA anticipates the elimination of zone fares and restructuring of certain routes to improve transfers.

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For further information contact the UMTA Office of Public Affairs at (202) 426-4043, or the Central Ohio Transit Authority, 50 West Broad Street, Suite 1230, Columbus, Ohio 43215. (UMTA Project No. OH-03-0018)

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