

# report

GENERAL MANAGER'S



Michael A. Hursh  
CEO & General Manager  
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District

GM Hursh signs a ceremonial MOU establishing the nation's first transit-collegiate collaboration with the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District.

## Much More Than Hot Air

Air compressors are essential for maintaining smooth operations in the Maintenance department and ensuring that AC Transit vehicles are safe and operational. Much more than hot compressed air, each plays a crucial role in inflating tires, a routine and vital aspect of bus maintenance. That's why the Facilities department recently upgraded the outdated air compressor in the Emeryville-D2 tire shop. The

previous compressor experienced frequent breakdowns, leading to disruptions and decreased productivity. Since the tire shop handles vehicle tires for the entire division, this replacement was critical. In line with the District's sustainability commitments, the new compressor is designed to consume less energy while meeting the same workload requirements.

More than just hot air, the new compressor uses less energy while handling the same workload.

## what's inside

- Accessibility Year-round for Riders with Disabilities
- New Webpages Transform User Experience
- Climbing Career Ladders

## ZEBU's Global Gala Launch

AC Transit's decades-long vision to advance transit careers for both skilled and unskilled workers became a reality on October 3 with the official launch of the Zero Emission Bus University (ZEBU). This milestone in the District's nearly 65-year-old legacy was celebrated with a gala at the Training and Education Center.

While a heat wave prompted a more relaxed approach to formal business attire, the spike in the mercury did not diminish the festive mood. The day featured speeches from prominent federal, state, and local transit and elected officials. The event culminated with a historic check presentation and the groundbreaking announcement of the nation's first-ever transit-collegiate partnership.

"Most of you know we've been operating zero emission buses for nearly 25 years, and have developed the most comprehensive program, I'm gonna say all over," said Board Vice President Diane Shaw, in her opening gala remarks. "I'm really proud of what this group has done, they really are being sought after by everybody across the world."



FTA Deputy Administrator Veronica Vanterpool presents a \$40.5 million combined Low-and-No-Emission Grants to Board VP Diane Shaw and GM Michael Hursh

ZEBU is a first-of-its-kind technical institute made possible through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Bus and Low-and-No-Emission Grants Award. For two consecutive years, 2023 and 2024, the FTA has recognized several AC Transit zero emission programs and presented the District with a check totaling \$40.5 million, including \$16 million earmarked to re-imagine the

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1980s-era Training and Education Center into the cutting-edge ZEBU.

"The awards that AC Transit has won, we had \$1.5 billion to give out, \$9 billion in demand. So that means we are investing in the best projects. So, you all should know, that these projects in your communities are among the best that we are selecting," the FTA's Deputy Administrator Veronica Vanterpool.



Assemblymember Liz Ortega calling the ATU 192 Maintenance Trainers and Chabot College Instructors of Record along with the ZEBU inaugural apprentice class to the stage.

CEO and General Manager Michael Hursh reflected on the long and challenging path that led to the university's founding. He reminded gala attendees that the vision for ZEBU dates to 1999 when AC Transit introduced its first hydrogen fuel cell bus.

"Along the nearly 25-year journey, we encountered a mountain of setbacks, failures, and challenges," Hursh acknowledged.

Despite these obstacles, Hursh credited the District's commitment to innovation and risk-taking for its emergence as a global leader in zero emission transit. One key milestone he highlighted was AC Transit's establishing the unprecedented Stanford-supported 5-x-5 study, the industry's only comprehensive test of all available propulsion systems.

"As we have proven zero emission technology, we are now going to give the industry the training programs that will get not only the incumbent workforce, but our future workforce to maintain these fleets," Hursh noted, underscoring the District's advanced progress in meeting the state mandate to transition all bus fleets to zero emission by 2040.

ZEBU has completed an extensive accreditation process in partnership with the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District, establishing the nation's first transit-collegiate collaboration. The gala featured a ceremonial signing of a memorandum of understanding between the District and Chabot College, with college President Dr. Jamal Cooks participating in the event.

Through a combination of classroom instruction, webinars, hands-on training, and cutting-edge virtual reality learning, apprentices can now earn half the required college credits toward an Associate of Science degree, explained Chabot-Las Positas Community College District Chancellor Ronald Gerhard.

"Our organizations have worked closely together to establish an apprenticeship program that meets critical workforce needs that is needed in our region, helps apprenticeship become high-skilled workers, and takes a step towards addressing what we know as climate change impacting our world and our community."

No matter the location around the globe, virtual reality learning now safely places the intricacy of high voltage fuel cell propulsion systems at anyone's fingertips, with courses taught by Amalgamated Transit Union 192 Maintenance Trainers Leonardo Loaiza, Scott McCutcheon, Eric Howell, Jose Oseguera-Garcia, and Lucas McClafin, who are now Chabot College Instructors of Record.

Jamaine Gibson, ATU Director of Apprenticeships and Workforce Development, shared with attendees that ZEBU represents the beginning of a completely new approach to workforce development.

"ATU has about 138 apprenticeship programs across the US and Canada. But what makes this one so special, is the willingness from the agency and from the local, to say we're going to create a program that's gonna' make the community better, that's gonna' make California better."



FTA Deputy Administrator Veronica Vanterpool dons VR goggles to demonstrate how virtual reality learning now safely places the intricacy of high voltage fuel cell propulsion systems at anyone's fingertips.

ZEBU's inaugural class features Carlos Cardenas (D3), Carlos Gutierrez (D2), Eduardo Villarreal (D6), Frank Chavarria (D3), and Victor Cardenas (D3), who proudly wore AC Transit-green t-shirts and received enthusiastic applause as history makers for the District.

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Assembly member Liz Ortega, ATU Local 192 President LaTrina Meredith, along with staff from the California Air Resources Board, California Energy Commission, and the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz), took part in the gala's highlight tours of the soon-to-be-transformed ZEBU training classrooms. They donned virtual reality goggles and even climbed atop the power stack of a fuel cell bus.

Ultimately, it was General Manager Michael Hursh who most fully embodied the ideals of the newly established ZEBU.

"If you back zero emission, we might just be able to save this planet."

*Chabot-Las Positas Chancellor Ronald Gerhard, President Jamal Cooks, Board VP Diane Shaw, and GM Michael Hursh display the MOU, marking ZEBU's accreditation and opening access for District apprentices to earn Chabot College credit.*

## New Webpages Transform User Experience

The District recognizes that its website, [actransit.org](http://actransit.org), frequently serves as the initial point of contact not only for those seeking information about our transit services but also for users interested in learning more about our programs, initiatives, and business opportunities with the District. Therefore, a well-designed website is essential for providing easy access to information.

This was the goal of the Sustainability and Communications teams, who were tasked with creating new landing pages to effectively educate users about Sustainability, which includes the District's business operations conversion, and Zero Emissions, which covers the bus fleet conversion. The redesigned webpages not only showcase the District's pioneering efforts in reducing greenhouse gases but also engages riders, employees, and organizations in promoting our culture of environmental stewardship and sharing best practices for implementing climate-conscious actions.

Visitors can easily access the new Sustainability and ZEB pages by navigating to the drop-down menu on [actransit.org](http://actransit.org). Select "About Us," then choose "Sustainability & ZEB."

The ZEBU page now features a dedicated section for Zero Emission Bus University (ZEBU), while the Sustainability page provides links to various ongoing projects, including the Climate Action and Sustainability Plan.

### Sustainability at AC Transit

- Plans and Reports
- Legislative Affairs
- Sustainability and Zero Emission Program

#### The Future of Transit: AC Transit's Zero Emission Bus Fleet

Since 1999, AC Transit has been at the forefront of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from transit vehicles. Thanks to our innovative approach and willingness to take risks, we are on track to achieve a 100% tailpipe emission-free fleet ahead of California's 2040 mandate. Our trailblazing journey began with a single hydrogen-powered bus, and over the past 25 years, we have expanded our fleet to include hydrogen fuel cell electric and all-electric buses.

In the process, our maintenance protocols have ensured the longevity of zero emission propulsion systems beyond manufacturer specifications. We have developed a comprehensive manual for zero emission bus maintenance, conducted a Stanford University-supported study on all existing industry propulsion systems, and now we lead in zero emission training. What began as a small vision has blossomed, with 10% of the buses operated by AC Transit being zero emission. To track our progress and gain more insights into our zero emission advancements, please refer to the [2024 Zero Emission Program Annual Progress Report](#).

#### Welcome to Zero Emission Bus University (ZEBU)

At the core of ZEBU is AC Transit's renowned workforce development program, recognized by the state of California and the federal government for excellence in technical training, career development, and apprenticeships. We have also launched the nation's first transit-collegiate partnership with Chabot College, paving the way for innovative learning in zero emission transit.

Continue reading to learn more about how AC Transit is leading the future of zero emission technology and transit workforce training.

#### A Pioneering Partnership

A key feature of ZEBU is its strategic partnerships, notably Progress in Action (PIA), a leadership collaboration between AC Transit and the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 192. Thanks to the efforts of the PIA, a groundbreaking partnership with the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District now allows AC Transit Maintenance Trainers to serve as instructors of record for the college district. This unique collaboration enables apprentices to earn half of the credits required for an Associate of Science degree, supporting both their vocational and academic growth.

#### Historic Investments: The Fuel of ZEBU's Workforce Development

For two consecutive years—2023 and 2024—the FTA has championed AC Transit's decades-long dedication to reducing and eventually eliminating our greenhouse gas emissions through bus and Low- and No-Emission Grant Awards (Low-No Grant). The 2023 award of \$25.5 million is pivotal in transitioning our bus fleet to fuel cell-electric buses. This includes \$16 million dedicated to remanaging our 1980s-era Training and Education Center into the new, state-of-the-art Zero Emission Bus University, along with an additional \$1.275 million awarded for workforce development.

The 2024 award of \$15 million continues this commitment by facilitating the replacement of diesel buses with zero emission buses and expanding hydrogen fueling infrastructure, with an additional \$750,000 dedicated to workforce development, essential to building a skilled and adaptable workforce that can meet the evolving demands of modern transit systems.

#### 2023: \$25.5MM Low-No Grant

- \$16MM for Training and Education Center rehabilitation
- \$8.2MM for fuel cell buses
- \$1.275MM for workforce development

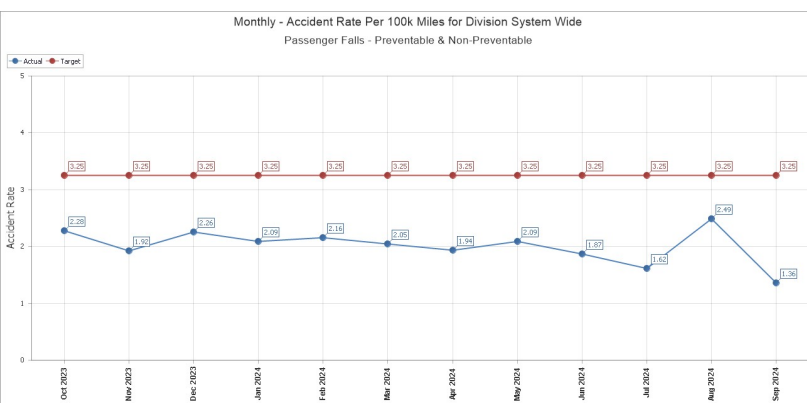
#### 2024: \$15MM Low-No Grant

- \$750,000 for workforce development
- \$14.25MM for zero emission buses and facilities

# Smooth Operators

Along with overseeing thousands of daily passenger boardings, monitoring unplanned detours, and maneuvering through narrow street congestion around the clock, the District's Bus Operators effortlessly provide smooth driving, characterized by gentle motions and comfortable stops.

Thanks to the collective efforts of all District Operators, the system wide average rate of passenger falls has impressively reached 2.01 per 100,000 miles over the past 12 months. Beyond the well-deserved description of smooth operators, operators have consistently exceeded the District's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for passenger falls, which is set at 3.25 per 100,000 miles, every month throughout the year.



The systemwide average rate of passenger falls has reached 2.01 per 100,000 miles over the past 12 months.

So, how is this achievement possible? Beyond their heightened focus while driving, the District has established an Accident Reduction Task Force that meets monthly to analyze the root causes of incidents and develop initiatives aimed at reducing passenger falls and vehicle collisions. One key initiative involves engaging operators regarding all types of incidents, whether preventable or not, to gather their feedback and enhance awareness.

Another crucial effort is the daily activation of safety messages from the Operations Control Center (OCC), which are broadcast to all buses. These concise and varied messages serve as reminders for best defensive driving practices.

The success of collaboration among District operators and the Accident Reduction Task Force showcases the power of teamwork in enhancing safety. This united effort not only establishes a culture of vigilance but also a commitment to the well-being of all riders.

**Congratulations to our Bus Operators!**

# Climbing Career Ladders

October marked a special start for graduates of two career ladder programs: Mechanic Helpers and Heavy-Duty Coach Mechanic Apprentices. Both programs, driven by the executive labor-management team known as the Progress in Action Committee (PIA), are designed to advance employees' upward and staffing to meet zero emission future.

The feeder program for Mechanic Helpers allows Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 192 employees, even those with little or no experience, to begin new careers by enrolling in a basic college automotive course, with tuition covered by AC Transit's college program. This one-year program functions like an apprenticeship, blending an effective mix of fundamental bus mechanic training with in-shop, real-world maintenance experiences.



Director of Maintenance Cecil B. (center) congratulates new Mechanic Helpers Jose E. (left) and Joel M.

Upon completion, employees matriculate into the State of California mechanic apprenticeship. Well-known for over 35 years, the Heavy-Duty Coach Mechanic Apprenticeship is a four-year, eight-course, core competency program that yields certified Journey Level Mechanics (JLM). The program requires over 900 hours of class combined with 8,000 hours of in-shop experiences, entailing bumper-to-bumper work, from preventive maintenance inspections to advanced electrical systems.

Moreover, the District's recent partnership with Chabot College now means all future enrollees, including all current apprentices, will earn up to a total of 26 college credit units toward an Associate of Science. All training remains in-house as Chabot College accredited the program's curriculum, and staff in ATU Local 192 Maintenance Trainers of the Training and Education Department are Instructors of Record of Chabot College. A complete educational ecosystem touting career ladder successes for the District, ATU, and its employees.



Apprentice graduates, pictured, left to right, Robert K., Raul C., David J., Cecil B., Dir. Of Maintenance, Michael J., Adrian V.



# Accessibility Year-round for Riders with Disabilities

Disability Employment Awareness Month, observed each October, aims to raise awareness about the employment challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and highlight their contributions to the workforce. Join us as we recognize this event not just as a monthly celebration, but as a vital step towards fostering inclusion and accessibility for all. Together, AC Transit commits to ongoing efforts that extend far beyond this occasion, ensuring lasting support for riders with disabilities.

Accessible transit features such as wheelchair ramps, priority seating, and audio-visual announcements enable people with disabilities to achieve greater independence and fully participate in the workforce. For decades, AC Transit's Accessibility Department has played a key role in helping disabled riders in the East Bay access these onboard services while using our bus lines.

AC Transit website has been optimized for screen reader users by minimizing PDF usage and undergoing regular accessibility audits.

During the Realign public outreach, an accessible table of changes and turn-by-turn directions was provided online to assist blind and low vision riders with the proposed adjustments. Additionally, the Communications department updates the onboard announcement system for every service change, offering visual and audio cues to help riders identify stops.

Bus Operators receive ongoing training on essential skills to assist riders with disabilities, including wheelchair securement and recognizing blind riders at stops. AC Transit also invests in new buses equipped with the latest ramp technology and designs, like our new Transbay MCIs, which feature a low-floor area at a



Onboard signage has been redesigned for improved readability.



Color-Coded Flash Cards permit disabled riders to make a series of non-verbal requests to Bus Operators, including deploying a lift, ramp, or kneeler.



New AI cameras are detecting illegal stopping and parking in bus stops and bus lanes to keep them clear and accessible, particularly for riders with disabilities.

The department offers free training on how to use the bus system, including the flashcard program. With Color-Coded Flash Cards, riders can request that the Bus Operator deploy a lift, ramp, or kneeler, or signal their need for the operator to wait until they are seated.

AC Transit also offers wheelchair marking services to assist wheelchair users in more easily securing their wheelchairs while on board. This system simplifies the tethering process, ensuring a safer and more convenient transit experience.

In addition, the Accessibility Department provides valuable resources, including outreach efforts to raise awareness of available services at events, collecting community input, and collaborating with disabled community members to test new accessibility features and technologies.

The Customer Service Center processes the Regional Transit Connection (RTC) Discount Card. Once approved, the RTC card provides reduced fare options on AC Transit bus lines and other participating transit agencies throughout the region. Agents within the Customer Service Call Center also undergo regular training in best practices for providing wayfinding assistance to people with disabilities. Communications

Information for riders with disabilities has been updated in both print and online formats to enhance accessibility. Onboard signage has been redesigned for improved readability, and the

second door and room for two mobility devices. Its second door also uses a simpler and faster ramp over the old MCI coaches' lift. Before its launch, the MCI underwent invaluable review and scrutiny from community members with disabilities.

Additionally, the newly implemented Hayden AI technology uses onboard cameras equipped with artificial intelligence software to detect and issue citations to motorists who illegally stop and park at bus stops and in bus lanes. This technology helps ensure that bus stops remain clear and accessible, particularly for riders with mobility challenges who may have difficulties boarding when stops are obstructed.

AC Transit staff are actively exploring opportunities to improve transportation access for riders of all abilities. The District is finalizing the development of web pages and QR codes designed to assist riders with low vision in accessing at-stop information more easily. Additionally, Braille maps of stop hubs for downtown Berkeley and El Cerrito Del Norte BART are being tested. An AI-powered chatbot capable of responding to common rider inquiries through text and speech is also undergoing proof-of-concept testing. Additionally, a new mobile app, is in development, with potential features to enhance accessibility options. AC Transit staff are also collaborating with the MTC on a regional signage and way-finding project, along with an accessibility consultant, to explore ways to improve accessibility at bus stops.

# HR is Supporting Veterans Through Recruitment

As summer draws to a close and temperatures typically drop, the Human Resources department was ramping up its commitment to veteran well-being, starting with participation in the "Stand Down in the Town" event at Oakland's St. Vincent De Paul. This event serves as a comprehensive resource hub for unhoused veterans, offering medical care, mental health support, housing assistance, and employment resources. AC Transit's Talent Acquisition team took a proactive role by sharing information about public transportation options, including discounted fares and job opportunities, while reaffirming the District's commitment to helping veterans rebuild their lives.



*The HR team met with over 50 job seekers seeking IT and administrative roles during the Alameda Chamber and Economic Alliance Job Fair.*

*The District joined forces with the Fremont Elks Lodge to spread the word about Clipper Start's 50% discount on AC Transit bus fares.*



September, named after the Latin word for "seven," also presented an opportunity for the District to collaborate with the Fremont Elks Lodge for its Mobile Medical Outreach. At this event, veterans received healthcare services, while HR team members provided life-enhancing information on the Clipper Start program, which offers a 50 percent discount on AC Transit bus fares for eligible recipients.

Additionally, September's harvest moon marked the HR team's participation in the Alameda Chamber and Economic Alliance Job Fair, where staff met with over 50 job seekers, focusing primarily on information technology (IT) and administrative roles with the District.

Collectively, the events of the ninth month highlight the HR team's dedication to not only promoting employment opportunities but also building meaningful connections that can help our community members achieve fulfilling careers.

# Turning on a DIME

As part of the District's strategic plan to transition its bus fleet to zero-emission buses (ZEB) by 2040, the Innovation and Technology (IT) team is dedicated to enhancing data insights, improving customer experience, and supporting cloud migration through the Data Integration and Management Environment (DIME) initiative.

The modernization of DIME will enable AC Transit to collect, integrate, and analyze extensive data from ZEBs in real-time, offering valuable insights into performance, efficiency, and maintenance requirements. This will enhance route planning, optimize energy consumption, and improve overall fleet management, ultimately reducing costs and facilitating business transformation for the District.



By consolidating data from various systems, the DIME platform will help predict maintenance needs for the ZEB fleet, minimizing downtime and ensuring that buses operate at peak efficiency.

Furthermore, modernizing DIME will allow for seamless integration of customer-related data, providing more accurate real-time arrival information, smoother ticketing processes, and enhanced passenger accessibility.

DIME will also assist AC Transit in tracking the environmental impact of ZEBs, supplying critical data on emissions reductions and energy usage. This information is vital for reporting progress to stakeholders and meeting sustainability regulatory requirements.

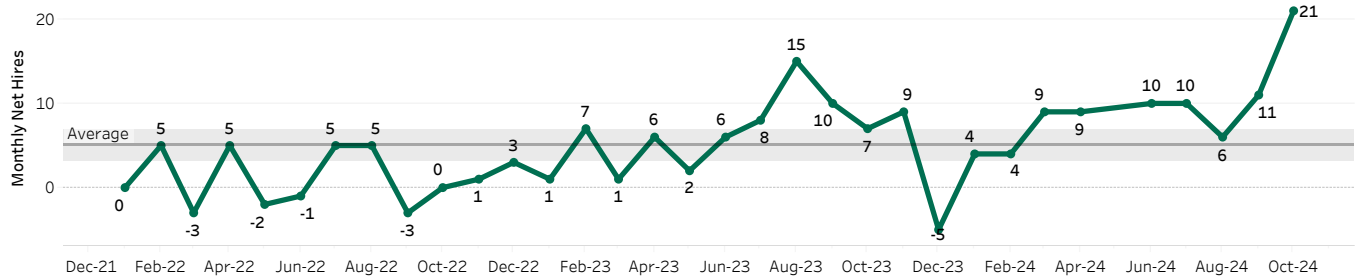
A modern DIME platform will ensure that AC Transit's data infrastructure is scalable enough to support the expanding zero-emission fleet while remaining adaptable to future technologies and innovations.

# HR Personnel Activity Report

## HIRING - OPERATORS [Jan 2022 - Oct 2024]

Total Hiring	Total Separations	Net Hires	Op Promotions: 12-Mo	Bus Operator	
				Hiring	Separations
572	417	155	25	2022	182
				2023	209
				2024	181
				Grand Total	572
					417

### Monthly Net Hires [Total Hires - Total Separations]



### TOTAL HIRES v SEPARATIONS by Division

		2022				2023				2024				Grand Total
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
Hiring	D-2 Bus Drivers	10	6	16	1	9	15	2	24	14				97
	D-3 Bus Drivers	3	1	4	3	8	1	15	6			16		57
	D-4 Bus Drivers	14	17	2	14	13	13	15	6	27	11			132
	D-6 Bus Drivers	3	6	9	3	12	14	4		1	1	16		69
	Special Division 7	1	1	3	4	3	2	1						15
	Transportation Training	11	9	24	20	9	13	15	6	11	12	50	22	202
Separations	D-2 Bus Drivers	5	3	3	4	3	2	3	1	3	1	2		30
	D-3 Bus Drivers	3	5	2	1	2	4	4	3	1	4	1		30
	D-4 Bus Drivers	3	6	13	8	1	4	8	6	4	6	10		69
	D-6 Bus Drivers	5	3	2	6	1	8	1	4	4	3	2		39
	Special Division 7	8	12	11	11	13	12	6	8	11	10	6		108
	Transportation Training	13	6	17	17	16	12	7	13	13	8	18	1	141
Grand Total		76	72	103	98	81	98	91	81	89	72	105	23	989

### HIRES v SEPARATIONS TREND

\*Data reflects Promotions during FY2024

