

YCIPTA is Formed to Provide Transit Services for Yuma County

Transit services in Yuma County have been struggling for the past couple of years. Routes were reduced, the City of Yuma discontinued its funding support and there were issues with the prior operating contractor. With the assistance of Charlene FitzGerald, Yuma Metropolitan Planning Organization (YMPO), Robert Pickles, County Administrator for Yuma County and Greg Wilkinson, City Administrator for City of Yuma, the municipalities of Yuma County and Northern Arizona University petitioned the Yuma County Board of Supervisors to create an intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (IPTA) for the purposes of managing and operating transit services in Yuma County. On January 14, 2011, the YCIPTA held its first Board of Directors meeting and on July 5, 2011, John Andoh, the new Transit Director for YCIPTA took the helm.

Today, YCIPTA consists of the cities of San Luis, Somerton, Yuma, Town of Wellton, Yuma County, Cocopah Indian Tribe, Northern Arizona University and Arizona Western College, with each contributing operating funds to match the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds received in the Yuma Urbanized Area. Each member entity appoints their highest Chief Executive Officer to serve on the Board of Directors. There are 8 Board Members at this time. Robert Pickels from Yuma County is the Chair and Greg Wilkerson from City of Yuma is Vice Chair. This arrangement takes the politics out of public transit.

Presently, YCIPTA is managing the Yuma County Area Transit (YCAT) system under an intergovernmental agreement with YMPO until the formal transition of the system occurs in Summer of 2012. At this time, YCIPTA will be the administrator of YCAT establishing policy for the system. YCIPTA is presently working with FTA to receive grantee status to make this transition occur.

YCAT today operates six routes throughout Yuma County with a dial-a-ride service for seniors and persons with disabilities. YCIPTA is proposing service improvements that will not exceed the revenue vehicle service hours, but reallocate the services in a more seamless manner to improve the overall efficiency of YCAT. In addition, YCIPTA is now part of the Greyhound Lines, Inc network, and through YCAT, passengers can purchase tickets at the YCAT Bus Facility or use Greyhound tickets on YCAT routes for continued travel to Wellton or San Luis, destinations not served by Greyhound. YCIPTA will receive approximately \$50,000 a year in commission which is additional match revenue for the transit system.

YCIPTA Board Chair and Yuma County Administrator Robert Pickels said, "Our work is paying off. We are saving money, maximizing our opportunities for funding, and holding off service cuts. We will be looking for every opportunity to keep service at good levels. We are setting high standards and want the best transit service. YCIPTA is our chosen path." According to YCIPTA's Transit Director, John Andoh, "Hundreds of actions needed to occur to make the transition". The next big step for YCIPTA is to complete a five year budget and operations plan with the assistance of ADOT and Yuma County. According to Andoh, "We will be diving right in with our riders, the general public, and anyone interested in good public transportation. Our Board wants a sustainable plan that can really have a positive impact on the lives of our residents. These are the kinds of things our communities expect

and we want to deliver.” The Yuma Regional Transit Study is due to be completed in January 2012. The Study will also set the framework for a future transit tax to support a long term sustainable transit system.

For more information about YCIPTA, contact John Andoh at 928.539.7076 or visit their new website, www.ycipta.az.gov.