New 'Bucket' Seats to Improve Riding Comfort on 30 More Transit Liners

As result of a study into latest improvements in equipment, AC Transit will be able to offer its passengers more comfortable seats and an easier operating rear door exit in 30 new buses ordered this month for delivery before the end of 1963.

The buses, costing $818,000, will accommodate passenger growth and replace obsolete equipment. Fifteen of the coaches will be assigned for use on neighborhood lines, while the rest will supplement other East Bay service.

With the new coaches, the district will retire between 10 and 15 obsolete gasoline-powered models. The contract award to General Motors Corp. also incorporates an option for the purchase of another 30 buses before May 1, 1964, giving the district the advantage of holding the line against possible price increases in anticipated equipment needs.

The new rear door exit will retain the safety features of the push-type door presently in use, but will open at finger-touch control, with an assist from air pressure. The buses also will feature European-type bucket seats, enthusiastically approved during a public preview in Alameda last month.

Interior ceiling paneling presently in use on the district's newer equipment will be extended down past the windows on the latest coaches to present a more attractive appearance and to simplify maintenance.

The contract calls for both 53-passenger and 45-passenger buses, putting costs under the $855,000 earlier estimated for immediate equipment needs.

Towers Named to Head AC Maintenance

Everett A. Towers, East Bay transportation veteran, was appointed general superintendent of maintenance for AC Transit this month.

Towers, 63, was named to the top maintenance post to replace J. Brooks Rice who resigned to return to Western Greyhound Lines.

The new maintenance executive has been employed in the East Bay transit industry for more than 40 years. Towers went to work with Key System in 1920 as a machinist apprentice, working his way up as machine shop foreman, equipment construction superintendent and maintenance superintendent at the Emeryville division. He was named Rice's assistant when the district took over Key System in 1960.

(Continued on Page 4)
East Bay to Mark Centennial of First Train-Ferry Service During September

One hundred years ago, the event didn’t attract any too much attention. Next month, however, the East Bay expects to do better by perhaps the most important date in its momentous transportation history—the start of the first train-ferry service.

It was on September 2, 1863, that the “Liberty,” an ornate little locomotive with a good-luck figure riding the pilot deck, steamed down Seventh Street from Broadway to Gibbons Point to load passengers aboard the spruced-up ferry, Contra Costa.

It was the beginning of the first transbay commute, inauguration of the first steam train service, hub of a local and transcontinental transportation system that was to speed the progress of the entire Bay area.

Pioneer residents later recalled the inauguration of the “Local” as one of “great pomp and ceremony,” but in San Francisco, it was completely ignored. All eyes seemed focused on the transcontinental train and a fight for its terminal.

Spearheaded by Bay area transit historical groups, the Oakland Chamber of Commerce and AC Transit, the East Bay expects to do better on this centennial.

A month-long exhibit of transportation material, covering the past 100 years, has been planned for public view in the downtown area.

Governor Edmund G. Brown is scheduled to address a civic luncheon Sept. 30 which will feature transportation veterans, from our own ranks and from other companies that over the years were involved in boosting the eastern side of San Francisco Bay into the terminal for transcontinental railroads, the port of ships from around the world, the hub of the finest street transportation system in the nation, the center of a local and transbay bus network which now provides, a century later, an undreamed of answer to the question which bothered the first residents—how to “cross the bay”?

Other events will be held during the observance, planned to last for the month of September to give school children and residents, along with visitors, a chance to learn—or be reminded of—the amazing journey from tracks to tires.

The district’s historical booklet, issued in October, 1960, when the area crossed into a new era by inaugurating its first publicly-owned transportation system, the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, will be up-dated and re-issued.
Rice Commended for Top Maintenance

(Continued from Page 1)

General Manager Kenneth F. Hensel said Towers will bring to his new position "years of valuable experience in local transportation."

"The district is most fortunate to have such qualified personnel available to fill its top executive positions," he added.

Towers' civic activities include the Ahmeh Temple of the Shriners. He resides with his wife, Mildred, at 324 51st St., Oakland.

Rice, who had been with Greyhound for 29 years—counting six years in military service—before he joined AC Transit in 1960, is returning to his former company with a new title and greater responsibility. He will be director of maintenance for the entire western operations of the company, with offices in San Francisco.

During his tour with the district, AC Transit received the Fleet Owner Maintenance Efficiency Award for 1962, given by the national trade magazine of the truck and transit industry. For excellent maintenance performance.

The nation's top honor for fleet motor color design also was awarded to the district in 1961, by Fleet Owner magazine, for the color design of new equipment.

A resolution, commending Rice for his part in these achievements and in the district's outstanding maintenance record, was adopted by the directors after they were informed of his resignation.

Rice, who had served as assistant maintenance manager for Greyhound from 1946 until 1960, will continue to make his home at 3201 Hillem Dr., Oakland, with his wife, Emile. He has a married daughter, Mrs. Linda Larson of Castro Valley, and a grandson, Michael, 3.

During World War II, Rice served as a staff officer with the U.S. Army Transportation Corps and spent 15 months overseas. He is a colonel in the Army Reserve.

More Information

A note or phone call to the transit district—654-7878—will place your name on the mailing list for Transit Times if you are not already regularly receiving a copy of the monthly newsletter.

AC Transit passenger revenue continued on the upswing during June, amounting to $1,069,420 for the month, an increase of 2.6 per cent over June, 1962.

Income was not sufficient, however, to provide for full amortization and depreciation and bond debt requirements, leaving a deficit for the month of $97,482.

During June, 1963, the transit industry continued in the red, with preliminary June figures indicating a passenger revenue decrease of almost 6 per cent. The decrease was highest in smaller cities and was minor in the cities in population groups of 500,000 and over. San Francisco Municipal Railway, for example, remained almost even, carrying 1,079,000 passengers during the month, a drop of 0.5 per cent below 1962.

Commuter book sales for AC Transit were $132,990 for the month, an increase of 0.7 per cent over sales for the same period in 1962. Passenger revenue, plus other income, totaled $1,069,420, an increase of 2.6 per cent, and was sufficient to meet operational costs of $999,342, which were down 77 per cent below June, 1963. Income was not sufficient, however, to provide for full amortization and depreciation and bond debt requirements, leaving a deficit for the month of $97,482.
I think it is about time I wrote and expressed my appreciation for your wonderful service—the Information Department. I could never say enough for those girls, in moments I receive directions, which bus, where to get off, to any number on any street. And never once have I heard an impatient rejoinder....

Mrs. Hanna Warner
Oakland

I would like to voice my appreciation for the courtesy extended to me by one of your bus drivers (K. E. WHITING) who saw me some distance from Webster and Santa Clara trying to hasten my speed to get on the bus and waited for me to get on. I am 74 years old and have long wait....thank you....

Mrs. Josephine Morrissey
Alameda

I had the pleasure of riding a bus driven by a mannerly, competent man the other day (K. E. BONNING) .... he answers questions politely, gave clear and definite instructions, didn’t bring the bus to a jolting stop....and gave....ample time to disembark without being nervous.

Alice B. Hoffman
San Leandro

I would like to call your attention to (MRS. MAVIS BECKEN).... she greets her passengers with a smile....she goes out of her way to be courteous and to give helpful information....before leaving the terminal, she explains clearly that “this bus is an express”.... She also points out that the “No Smoking” sign should be observed. Finally, she has a smile and a cordial word for passengers leaving.

Edward C. Hartman
Oakland

This man (R. L. CARPENTER) got out of the bus to aid a blind rider traversing a busy street. I think that unselfish actions such as this are the best public relations that an organization such as yours can receive.

William T. Hunter
Oakland

Three elderly ladies were bidding one of them goodbye as the other two were taking the bus. Many drivers would have been impatient to be off—not this one (V. C. WALKER).... he had a gentle wave and goodbye to the little lady left behind.

Mrs. L. C. Cayot
Oakland

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Transit District for supplying such excellent service to its patrons by the extended service, improved buses and choice of drivers.

Mrs. R. A. Hutzler
Hayward
ACTIONS OF THE BOARD

At an adjourned meeting July 24, 1963 the Board of Directors:

• Awarded contract for purchase of 30 new buses to General Motors Corp. at a cost of $818,000, on motion of Vice President Coburn.

• Approved service changes on Lines 51-College Ave. and 68-Garvin Ave., on motion of Director Warren.

• Approved Alameda County Highway Advisory Committee program for improving State highway system in 1964-65 fiscal year, on motion of Director Warren.

• Authorized representation at annual meeting of American Transit Association, on motion of Vice President Coburn.

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At the regular meeting August 14, 1963, the Board of Directors:

• Approved inauguration of bus service in southeast Hayward residential area terminating at new campus of California State College at Hayward, on motion of Vice President Coburn.

• Authorized $1500 for feasibility study on possible use of hydrofoil and hover craft by the District, on motion of Director Warren.

• Adopted resolution commending J. Brooks Rice for devoted service as maintenance manager, on occasion of his resignation, on motion of Vice President Coburn.

• Officially determined prevailing wage rates in construction industry for purposes of bid documents, on motion of Vice President Coburn.

District Records Low Accident Costs

AC Transit's accident costs last fiscal year were among the lowest in the industry, totaling 2.9 per cent of the district's gross income.

The district spent $364,000 during the 1962-63 fiscal year on accident claims and injury insurance, according to Robert E. Nisbet, attorney for AC Transit. The national average for transit companies was 4.5 per cent. Some larger operations were as high as 11 per cent.

Claims department efforts, plus the district's concentration on safe operations and the cooperation of drivers and maintenance workers, contributed to the low rate, Nisbet said.