February Revenues Hit Million Mark, Boosted by Express

Two revenue achievements have been added to AC Transit's records, with some of the credit going to Leap Year and favorable weather.

For the first time in 11 years, East Bay passenger revenues hit the million dollar mark for the month of February.

February revenue this year amounted to $1,017,000 — an increase of 7.7 per cent over last year. The last time the fare boxes reached the million dollar mark was in February, 1953, when the former Key System collected $1,037,000.

Bus commuters using the district's new Bancroft Express also have topped expectations with revenue increasing considerably more than anticipated.

Passenger Gains

In its first seven weeks of operation between San Leandro, East Oakland and downtown Oakland, average daily revenue on the new peak-hour express has increased 84.7 per cent. Seventh of the district's intercity express lines, Line 38 operates via Bancroft Ave. and East 14th St. to provide 35 minute service between San Leandro and downtown Oakland.

While February revenues have increased steadily since 1960, size of the increase this year was attributed to the extra leap-year work day and to favorable weather. Without the extra day, revenues would have shown a gain over last year of 5.2 per cent.

New Pass Launched With Merchant Aid

East Bay downtown business groups were observing with special interest this month AC Transit's new "Shop-a-Round Pass," launched with promising results for a four-month experimental period.

The pass, of interest to the transit industry nationally as well as to local business centers, was introduced with enthusiastic assistance from merchants of the downtown Oakland area.

To acquaint the public with the advantages of using the pass, retailers cooperated on a promotional and advertising program and in individual efforts.

A special emblem, featuring Lake Merritt and downtown Oakland's skyline, was being used on the pass and in promotional literature to help identify the plan.

The pass provides virtually free and unlimited midday riding on all buses in the central Oakland business district plus the return trip home within the central fare zone.

During the initial days of the experiment, an average of 300 passes were being sold daily.

(Continued on Page 5)
Small Gasoline Buses Sent to Pasture

Last of the gasoline-powered 1300 series buses were retired from neighborhood lines this month, moving the district’s program of serving the public with modern, all-diesel equipment that much closer to completion.

Withdrawal of the last 16, small 36-passenger General Motors buses left only 28 gasoline-model “Macks” still in service. Used as needed on local lines and for special service, the “Macks” also will be retired as soon as possible with acquisition of new buses.

A new program of maintenance efficiency resulted in availability of additional diesel equipment, permitted the retirement of the 1300 series.

Sunday Excursion Pass Proves Popular and a Revenue-Producer as Sales Pass 100,000

Sale of the district’s Sunday and holiday excursion pass, inaugurated in 1962 as a “summer experiment,” passed the 100,000th mark this month with proven revenue value and popular appeal.

In its 20 months of existence, the pass has increased the district’s Sunday revenue by approximately 75 per cent.

Pass revenue totaled $32,282 during the first 12 months and $27,412 during the next eight months. The 100,000 milestone was reached March 1, when 891 passes were sold, bringing the total to 100,384.

In honor of the event, special emblems of thanks - the sweet, feminine kind - were sent to Alameda, where the idea of the pass originated.

The “thanks” were presented specifically to Vice Mayor William McCall, for it was the City Council of Alameda and McCall, as mayor at the time, who first proposed the pass. In gratitude, McCall and council members, along with their families, were presented with Sunday passes for their or their sight-seeing trips.

Making the presentation were Myrtle Sarnstrom and Maureen Layne, secretaries from the district’s executive offices.

As result of Alameda’s proposal, the board approved the pass on an experimental basis, beginning with July 1, 1962. Selling for 60 cents, it allows purchasers to ride anywhere in the East Bay, on date of purchase, and on any bus.

Old-timers Pensioned

Transit workers who recently have retired include:

Louis R. Coats, 710 Palmer Rd., Walnut Creek, who started on the street cars in 1942 and switched to bus operations in 1947.

Everett Westh, 7869 Garfield Ave., Oakland, service employee “A,” retiring after 30 years.

Harold R. Wiles, formerly of 2807 Evergreen Ave., Richmond, mechanic “A,” who entered service in 1943.

George E. Scott, 2645 - 75th Ave., Oakland, who started as a conductor in 1924, and became a bus driver in 1932.

Scheduled for retirement on April 1 is William F. Lehman, 181 Oak Rd., Danville, motor coach operator. He entered service March 30, 1943.

Mechanic Takes Off On Japanese Tour

AC Transit’s full-blooded Comanche mechanic — a rarity these days — took his tribal dances and sincere convictions to the other side of the world this month in an unusual “good will tour” of Japan.

Randlett L. Wahnee, 22, was given a leave of absence from the maintenance department at the Emeryville division to make the trip to Japan with his family.

Before he returns, he plans to entertain the Japanese, let them meet and get to know a real American Indian family and to give them his own simple descriptions of living in this country.

PEACE FLIGHT — Randlett L.Wahnee, AC Transit mechanic, and son, Randy, 4, prepare to take tribal dances and goodwill messages to Japan in a personal “cultural exchange.”

Although he’s making the tour “for free,” Wahnee decided to give up his pay check and plans to buy a home so he could “try to change the Japanese ideas about Americans and Indians.”

“I’m going to tell them how we live and about my work — that there’s good and bad in all races, but we’re not uneducated and illiterate; that we have the opportunity to learn and go to school and make something of ourselves.”

Although the district has other Indians working as drivers and maintenance men, Randy apparently is the only “all fourths Comanche” mechanic. He went to work in January, 1961, and has been on the 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. shift at Emeryville.

Randy got his training at the Laney Trade School in Oakland after he was brought here by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs from his Oklahoma home at Fort Sill Lawton. His family acreage is easy to spot, according to Randy. It’s the one with “one weak, little old oil well.”

As a Comanche, Wahnee said he was “born dancing” and “born on a horse”— talents apparently inherited by his children, Randy, 4, and Sonya, a snub-nosed 2-year-old.

Randy and his “side-kick” already have won considerable notice in the Bay area for their tribal dances. Wahnee’s added skills as a horseback performer — he also sings and lectures at the same time — resulted in the invitation to visit Japan.

Arrangements were made by the man who owns a Japanese version of “Disneyland” in Tokyo to pay expenses for Randy, his wife, Irene, and his “two little Indians” to visit the country.

They expect to be in Tokyo during the Olympic Games, then to travel through Japan, to small villages, dancing and singing for the people.
Who's the Best?

Bus-O-Rama Contest of Skill Planned to Find AC Transit’s ‘Driver of the Year’

AC Transit’s bus operators are going to have the chance to prove (or discover) a question that’s bounced for years around the “gillie room” at each division. “Who is the best driver, the one to be acclaimed ‘Driver of the Year’?”

To find out, the district is sponsoring a Bus-O-Rama, a driving skill contest on an obstacle course which will simulate the same driving problems that exist on streets.

The contest is purely for the drivers’ own benefit and sport—and not for employee records. But the public will be invited to watch, particularly at the finals when the top drivers from each of the divisions.

The test in skill may also resolve another time-old argument about women drivers. Out of the district’s almost 1,000 operators, some 51 are women—toting generally top flight safety records.

All drivers are invited to demonstrate their skill, provided they do not have a “5-point” (or more) accident from the time the contest was announced on March 1 until finals are completed early in June.

Sign-up blanks may be obtained from safety instructors or division dispatchers, but must be returned to safety instructors after they are filled out.

Operators then will receive a badge saying: “I’ll drive Bus-O-Rama 1964,” as a sign they intend to show what they can do with a motor coach “in the field.” Early sign-ups by operators will facilitate scheduling trials and assure that each driver has a chance to participate.

Elimination trials will be held on May 9, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; May 10, 9 a.m. until noon, and May 16, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Bus-O-Rama course in the parking lot on Eighth St., north of Frank Youell stadium.

Finals are scheduled for June 7, between the nine semi-finalists, to determine the top driver for 1964.

Details on prizes will be announced later, but are expected to include trophies and other awards.

Laid out on the course will be “seven problems,” simulated with barriers, rubber balls, stanchions, and barrels. The problems will cover these conditions:

- Negotiating a narrow street with parked cars; driving in a straight line; right turn; a study in overhang and “cheating,” a right turn with parking lane occupied; side clearance and near side loading zone.

Smoothness of operation also will be measured by a kind of “devil box”—a series of graduated tumbling cylinders placed on the floor of the coach. One jerk—and down go the cylinders, as well as the driver’s score.

Elapsed time also will be made a part of the scoring.

One hint, which may make a winner, from Safety Engineer G. G. Wadsworth:

“These are all things that are part of every day driving and an operator can be sharpening his skills daily on every run, like an athlete in training.”

Richmond Tops Record

Richmond Division drivers have topped the safety goal record in no uncertain style with a new record of 14,530 miles per accident.

The Richmond operators also won the coffee and doughnuts treat in January with 13,821 miles per accident, then surpassing that record with their February total.

The safety goal for each division is 12,450 miles per accident.

Special Pass Introduced with Enthusiasm

(Continued from Page 1)

Comparatively, the Sunday and holiday excursion pass, good for all-day riding throughout the district, was purchased by 442 riders on first day of sale and has grown to highs of 1700 passes sold on a single day.

The “Shop-a-Round Pass” sells for 25 cents cash or 20-cent token on any bus in the area bounded by Jack London Square, Grove St., Grand Ave. and Lake Merritt and Fallon St. It can be used for unlimited riding on any bus in that area between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. on date of purchase, Monday through Saturday.

Co-incidental with start of the “Shop-a-Round,” Berkeley merchants decided to temporarily suspend the “Ride & Shop” validating plan which provided shoppers with free round trip bus transit to downtown Berkeley for the past 16 months.

Participating firms decided on the suspension effective March 14, while they studied the Oakland pass and evaluated the contribution to downtown shopping made by the “Ride & Shop” plan.

IN MEMORIAM

William L. “Slim” Hankins, 67, whose column from the Seminary division had long been a popular feature in “Wheels,” a monthly newspaper published by the local division of the Carmen’s Union, died on March 6, less than a month before he was to be pensioned.

Hankins, who had been in ill health for some time, went to work as a motor coach operator on March 6, 1944—the same date of the month on which he died. He made his home at 9914 Cherry St., Oakland.

Harvey F. Davidson, 77, pensioned in 1948 after 30 years as a street car operator, died on March 10 in an Alameda hospital after a long illness.
Our 'Stockholders' Write...

AC Transit is proud to reprint below a few of the many letters of commendation received during the month — letters unsolicited from residents of the East Bay who are owners of the transit system. Letters were selected at random to represent the quality of courtesy, service and safety demonstrated by AC personnel in their most important relationship with our customers.

... I want to say a kind word for all the bus drivers. I am old and quite lame and I travel on the bus so much and do want to let you know how good all the drivers have been. And that I appreciate all the kindness shown me through the year of '63.

Mrs. Lela Harris
Oakland

It is with a heart full of gratitude that I send you this note. . . . we, the folks of Fruitvale, are indeed very grateful for the nice service we're getting since the bus runs every 20 minutes. The bus drivers, too, are very fine. Also we want to thank you for the Sunday Fun Pass — ride all day for 60 cents. Thanks, too, for the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District Information. . . . it is very helpful.

Irene Leibmann
Oakland

I wish to comment on the services of your driver (E. C. Williams) for the courtesy and helpfulness in recovering my lost purse on Line 79. . . . the money it contained was little, but it saved me a lot of trouble with keys and papers.

Mrs. Gotfred Laine
Oakland

It is with extreme pleasure that I express my appreciation and admiration for kindness that (E. C. Williams) . . . gave me. . . . Please let me explain that I am blind and he always stopped the bus where I stood regardless. Also he never once missed calling my stop. In fact he calls every stop. Also is very pleasant to the passengers with any information they require.

Reginald Collins
Oakland

I wish to express my joy on seeing "radios silent" on the buses. . . . it was most gratifying . . . to see the clever "Yakity, Yak, Yak, Yak" cartoon on the placard and lastly, most important of all, to see the sign on the bus. . . . I do appreciate the fine system we have here now with lovely buses, improved schedules and the absence of strikes.

Mrs. Edna Tuchock
Oakland

I would like to commend the actions of one of your drivers (C. T. Fleming) when my little boy was struck by a car. . . . the accident happened as my child left the bus and ran in front of it into the path of a coming car. Your driver immediately assumed rescue operations . . . saw to it that my son was laid down and helped him out from under the car and kept quiet. As my son says, "He comforted me." I would like to express my deep gratitude for his kindness and quick thinking and to tell him that by great good fortune my son escaped with only multiple abrasions and is in good shape.

Mrs. Patricia Kemp
Berkeley

The district's financial statistics in January showed little change from the same month a year ago, despite a decrease in Oakland department store sales.

Passenger revenue for the first month of 1964 was $1,056,950, an increase of .8 per cent over January, 1963.

The number of riders carried, however, was 4,489,718, a decrease of .7 per cent below the same month in 1963.

Department store sales in Oakland were down 11 per cent for the four weeks ending January 25. The transit industry nationally showed a reversal, with a .26 per cent increase in passenger revenue for January, 1964.

AC Transit operated 1,961,227 miles of scheduled service during the month, an increase of 20,796 miles over January of 1963. Costs of operation for the month were up 3.42 per cent.

The district's total income of $1,251,201 was sufficient to cover operating expenses of $1,128,276, plus equipment renewal and bond debt service.
At the regular meeting March 11, 1964, the Board of Directors:

- Directed General Manager to prepare recommendation and report on proposed sale of portion of Richmond division property to City of Richmond for purpose of widening Macdonald Avenue underpass, on motion of Vice President Coburn.

- Authorized members of Board of Directors to represent District at regional meeting of American Transit Association in Los Angeles, April 5-8, on motion of Director McDonnell.

`Pilot Model' Transit Shelter

`Constructed in San Leandro`

San Leandro bus riders had the benefit this month of using weather protection provided by a new AC Transit passenger shelter, the first of three authorized for San Leandro and Hayward.

A fourth shelter, sanctioned by the board of directors for installation at the end of Line 78 in the Parchester Village district of North Richmond, was in the planning stage.

Erected at Davis and Douglas Sts. in accord with San Leandro city regulations, the first pilot model offers weather protection to commuters using transbay, intercity express and local service. The boarding point is used by approximately 100 peak-hour morning passengers and some 50 school children, plus midday riders.

Joining commuters in giving the shelter its first "once over" were San Leandro City Councilman William F. Sverstedt, and William J. Bettencourt, member of the AC Transit board of directors and a San Leandro business leader.

Other shelters are planned for the intersection of Fargo and Washington Avenues and in downtown Hayward.

Most Timetables Ever

AC Transit distributed the largest number of pocket timetables in local transit history during 1963, giving "the time of day" to 1,620,000 riders.

The distribution showed an increase of 342,000 timetables over the 1,278,000 handed out to the public in 1962, symbolic of district growth.