AC Transit attained the "Best in the West" record for 1964 by showing the biggest passenger increase among major transit companies on the Coast.

The district carried 52,768,195 riders on its East Bay and transbay lines during 1964, as compared to 51,922,823 passengers in 1963, an increase of 1.63 per cent.

Other major transit lines showed a decrease for the year, with the exception of San Francisco Municipal Railway which showed up on the black side of the ledger with an increase of 0.7 per cent in riders carried.

Southern California Rapid Transit District in Los Angeles was down 4.4 per cent. Long Beach Public Transportation was down 1.0 per cent. Pasadena showed a decrease of 5.8 per cent. Rose City Transit of Portland recorded a decrease of 8.7 per cent; Sacramento Transit Authority, down 5.9 per cent; San Diego Transit System, down 12.8 per cent; and Seattle Transit System, down 5.9 per cent.

Nationally, AC Transit was one of four transit properties carrying a million or more passengers to show an increase in riding. Others included New York City Transit Authority, Chicago Transit Authority and Philadelphia Transportation.

The transit industry as a whole showed a .76 per cent decrease in riders carried during the year.

Bus Operators Top Safe Driving Record

Passengers had their safest ride yet as the district's three motor coach divisions topped previous records in February by averaging 13,650 miles per accident for the month.

The record, highest since the district began operations in October, 1960, beats the 13,250 miles per accident figure reached in April, 1964.

At the same time, drivers at the Emeryville division cracked a safety goal of their own, with 15,434 miles per accident - the best divisional average yet. Richmond previously held the honor, with 15,293 miles per accident, also tallied in April of last year.

Operators at Seminary division added to the present record with 13,609 miles per accident - well over the goal of 12,450 miles.

Both divisions received the traditional treat of free coffee and doughnuts.
District to Continue Transbay Service After Inauguration of Rapid Rail System

Buses still will be operated by AC Transit across the Bay Bridge to San Francisco after the Bay Area Rapid Transit District inaugurates transbay train service.

Directors of the district made this position clear this month in taking steps to preserve continued use of the Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco. The facility is leased by the district from the State Toll Bridge Authority.

While some loss in passengers to BARTD can be anticipated, directors

Adjustments Made to Local, Transbay Lines

Adjustments were made on 12 lines this month, tailoring service with level of patronage.

To accommodate an increase in riders, an additional morning and afternoon trip was added to Transbay Line L (Richmond), while another afternoon bus was put in operation on Line 31 (Oakland-Richmond Express).

Line 14 (Brookdale) was extended to a new terminal loop, via 35th Ave., School St., Coolidge Ave. to Brookdale Ave., to serve a wider area.

Night operations were reduced on three local lines, including Line 72 (San Pablo Ave.), Line 69 (6th St.-23rd St.) and Line 68 (Roosevelt-Garvin).

Inbound trips on Lines 80, 81 and 82 (East 14th St.) were adjusted during the night peaks to better enable buses to maintain schedules.

Minor time changes were made in Saturday operations of Lines C (Piedmont), E (Claremont) and O (Alameda) while maintaining the same headway.

Headway on Line L on Saturdays was changed from 35 to 40 minutes.

said there are East Bay areas where bus service will continue to provide faster, more direct and more convenient transbay transit than the new rail system.

The directors voted to make this position clear to the Toll Bridge Authority, the City of San Francisco and Western Greyhound Lines, stressing that they had no anticipation of abandoning transbay service or use of the terminal.

The board action followed a proposal by San Francisco officials that the terminal be taken over by Greyhound for its commute buses after rapid transit goes into service.

William H. Coburn, Jr., president of the board, pointed out that AC Transit doesn’t intend to give up its transbay lines and the State should be advised that the district plans to use at least part of the terminal when BARTD is operational.

Public Convenience

"As long as people want to ride our equipment, and it is profitable, we will keep buses rolling across the Bay," declared Director William J. Bettencourt. It is our responsibility to see that residents of the East Bay have good transportation; many may not want to transfer from a bus to a train and repeat the same process on the return trip, he added.

Director Robert M. Copeland concurred that there are areas where transferring between buses and trains would not be as attractive as a single continuous trip by motor coach.

In any case, directors agreed that buses would continue to roll across the bridge as long as people ride them.

Veteran Workers Retire from Transit Careers

“Busmen’s holidays” were in order this month for workers who have joined retirement rolls. They include:

John J. Jacoby, 980 Mountain Blv d., Oakland, a bus driver for 30 years, who retired from Emeryville Division.

Mrs. Virginia Gamble, 2014-A Clinton Ave., Alameda, who has worked in the accounting and treasury departments since August, 1943.

F. Vern Stambaugh, 6141 Broadway Terrace, Oakland, who went to work as a rail operator in 1925, became a bus driver in 1933 and served as president of Carmen’s Union, Division 192, from 1951 until January, 1965.
The explosive Key System pier fire of 32 years ago took on a new glow of mystery this month with the uncovering of a secret report, which labeled the blaze as a definite incendiary plot.

The report was compiled by the late Edward O. Heinrich, noted Berkeley criminologist who made an investigation of the fire after top Key officials decided it had been maliciously and purposely started.

Heinrich backed their suspicions with detailed findings, including photographs, diagrams, and "sealed envelopes of evidence."

He completely outruled any chance that the fire started from a dropped cigarette or cigar — as popularly believed at the time — and said it was caused by a marine flare, which was released to play against a piling near the water level, beneath the east side of slip No. 2.

The fire, discovered at 10:02 p.m. on May 6, 1933, leveled the pier terminal, left 14 cars and most of the rails a mass of twisted wreckage, destroyed all other property at the terminal, and burned the ferry boat, "Peralta."

The $3,000,000 blaze suspended Key's transbay service for three days, inconvenienced commuters, and provided a spectacular sight for watchers on every hill vantage point on both sides of the Bay.

And it posed a still unanswered question: "Who started the fire?"

The Southern Pacific extended its help during the emergency, honoring Key System tickets. Train service soon was provided to one remaining ferry slip, using stub tracks on part of the pier outside of the former train shed. Despite the severe loss, work on rebuilding began immediately and a new terminal was opened in October, 1934.

In the meantime, Heinrich's report was kept secret by officials, who made their own unsuccessful search for the arsonist. Even men most concerned with ferry boat service knew nothing of the conclusions.

Heinrich's report, found among old files after AC Transit moved into its present quarters, tells of finding ashes from the marine flare. It places the point of fire origin as between the east ramp of slip No. 2 and the public rest rooms, well below the dock, along a stringer east of a mooring spar.

On the stringer and at other points, he found deposits of the abnormal ash. His report excludes an accidental origin or a fire hazard as a contributing factor. He listed the "purpose" as one to cripple train service without loss of life.

The report also adds a new mystery. What happened to the complete file, including the "sealed envelopes"?
DISCOVERY OF A REPORT on the Key pier fire of May, 1933, led to another discovery this month, that some of the top men from wistful ferry boat days are still very much among us, with vivid memories of transportation experiences which included seagulls, fog — and sometimes, disasters.

One of the experts, Howard D. Hickman, lives in active retirement at 42 Diablo Circle, Orinda, after an around-the-world military career that preceded and followed his 17 years with the Key System fleet of ferry boats.

Hickman left Key in 1940, after 10 years as manager of the Marine Department, to become a much needed officer in the Army Transportation Corps.

But in between wars and decorations, he was part of the era of the turbine electric drive ferry, bringing the first boat, the "Hayward," into the Bay from Los Angeles in 1923.

As an engineer "in the know," he was persuaded to join Key to teach other engineers about the new form and how to be among the first to get on and off the boats without giving the impression of running.

During his years of handling ferry-boat operations, Hickman knew the major catastrophes, including the great May, 1933 fire. He discounts that it was "incendiary" and believes it was caused by a dropped cigarette.

Just before the fire he had gotten the "Peralta" repaired and "in beautiful shape." After the fire it was his job to look over the charred and twisted wreckage and report the ferry boat a total loss. Hickman also recalls when the "Peralta" dipped her bow in the water, washing commuters into the Bay.

200,000 Fair Visitors

But he remembers as his busiest day the opening of the Golden Gate International Exposition in 1939 and the problems of handling 200,000 daily visitors. The inadequate pier on the east side of Treasure Island was built against Hickman's recommendation and the result fulfilled his prophecy — that it would be "knocked down the first day."

Hickman confines his transportation now to dry land — and the carrying of material for garden walls, built with rocks from his travels.

Some Remember

OUT OF THIS WORLD — Considered a top expert on turbine electric ferries on San Francisco Bay, Howard D. Hickman has a treasure chest of memories.

We would like to express our appreciation for the service you provided our four kindergarten classes in demonstration of safety precautions on your AC Transit coach... many of our children had no previous experience with this kind of transportation and we are hopeful that they now have a good start in becoming thoughtful and conscientious travelers...

Teachers and Principal
Franklin Elementary School
Berkeley

... I had my first bus rides, Berkeley to San Francisco and return... the trip to Berkeley posed some problems for the bus driver; a man deposited the wrong sum and the driver was most courteous and explained the error... later two women got on with two children — wrong bus — again the driver was patient, courteous and with good humor gave them the necessary information and transferred... I was so impressed with his (C. H. Thompson) geniality... my fears of riding buses were dispelled.

Marjorie B. Walker
Berkeley

... For the past few years I have not been able to drive a car, after having had the use of one for years... your buses are pleasant to ride and I avail myself of your 60 cent passes very often on Sunday and holidays... your drivers are always helpful and courteous, especially to the elderly. When I have to phone for schedules or information... your operators are always patient in telling me exactly what route to follow...

Lan D. Saunders
Berkeley

... I want you to know that Jim Libby is a very nice man. He is nice with us children and so in return we be very nice to him. One time... I was late getting home... several buses went past but we didn't want to catch them. Our transfers expired so we paid another dime to get on his bus... us kids like him...

Mitchell Hurst
Oakland

... enclosed is my cheque for... tokens... I would like to say that I do a lot of bus travel and your drivers are always kind... I just like bus travel... The (tokens) are not for me, but will make a... good gift.

E. V. Hardie
Berkeley

... The driver (R. P. Fracht) was extremely courteous and noticing this, I also noticed that he drove the bus very smoothly and efficiently... he is a credit to himself and your organization...

Charles W. Kieser
San Francisco
ACTIONS OF THE BOARD

At an adjourned regular meeting Feb. 24, 1965, the Board of Directors:

• Opened bids for purchase of coin assorting and counting machines, and authorized General Manager to make award to Fitzgerald Electro-Mechanical Co. if bid found to be in order, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Amended requirements for district membership in California Association of Publicly Owned Transit Systems, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Authorized extension of Line 14-Brookdale Ave., on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Notified California Toll Bridge Authority that District will require continued use of Transbay Transit Terminal in San Francisco after rapid transit is in operation, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Approved proposed changes in Transit District Law concerning conduct of elections to the Board of Directors, on motion of Director Warren.

Express Service Hits Best Day in Revenue

The intercity express service hit its most profitable day on March 8, taking in $2,757.36—highest total revenue since the limited-stop system was inaugurated in March, 1961.

The seven express lines had receipts of almost 45 cents per mile for 6,160 miles operated, also a new record for a single day.

The best individual record was made by Line 33 (Berkeley-Oakland Express), with receipts of 63.42 cents per mile.

Maintenance Workers Boost Road Call Miles

Maintenance workers at the three divisions turned in their best record in over a year last month, by averaging 18,108 miles per road call.

Top honors, and the road call trophy, went to workers at Richmond Division, for 18,806 miles per call, a shade over the record set at Emeryville and Seminary divisions.

The divisional figure was the best since July, 1963, when the average was 18,181 miles, and May, 1963, when 19,531 miles was reached.