District ends fiscal year with new Passenger gains; public support cited

More people are riding AC Transit buses than ever before.

Passengers carried during the 12 month period ending June 30 came to 52,083,157 — an increase of nearly two per cent over the previous year. The additional business resulted in a better financial condition for the District than expected, according to a report on annual system operations, released this month.

Like most business firms and individuals, the District spent the year trying to make “ends meet.” But a surge in patronage and public support of a fare increase enabled AC Transit to cut an estimate deficit from $983,000 to $171,124 for the year.

Special concentration was given during the year to expanding service through line extensions and in scheduling additional express operations.

Delivery of another 30 new buses enabled the District to put 370 modern coaches on the road, well over half of the total fleet of 661 buses.

The new “stop-off and go-again” transfer system was numbered among the most valued changes.

The public also was introduced to a new concept in traveling luxury, the experimental “Freeway Train,” an articulated duo-bus which carries 77 passengers in greater utilization of crowded freeway space.

Travel was down slightly on local lines, but showed a substantial gain on transbay and East Bay intercity express service. Passenger revenue for the full year totaled $13,427,987, up 5.15 per cent over the year past.

The district carried 38,889,260 passengers on local lines, a decrease of 0.6 per cent below the preceding fiscal year. Transbay travel, however, continued to grow with 13,193,897 passengers taking the bus, a hike of 9.52 per cent. Intercity express lines showed a revenue gain of 12.14 per cent.

Operating expenses spiraled to a high of $15,469,239 — up 8.10 per cent over the year before — caused primarily by increased labor costs.

With a deficit of almost a million dollars looming, the District was forced to put good transportation to the test in January. Transbay commute fares were raised two cents a ride and East Bay children’s fares were boosted from 10 to 15 cents.

Riding, nevertheless, continued to gain in the following months.
Transit business showed a favorable increase for the month of September, in the number of riders carried and in passenger revenue.

Revenue from passengers totaled $1,162,267, up $84,082 or 7.80 per cent over $1,078,185 collected in September, 1965. Of the total, revenue on East Bay lines was up 6.63 per cent and on transbay service, 9.54 per cent. Commute book sales also showed an increase, with a total of $175,361, up 1.3 per cent over sales of $173,055 in the same month a year ago.

The number of riders carried by the District reached 4,345,008, an increase of 1.24 per cent over the 4,291,640 who rode District service in September, 1965. The number of riders carried on intercity lines reached 1,898,147 miles of service, an increase of 21,362 or 1.1 per cent over mileage of a year ago. Operational costs reached $1,269,999, up 6.63 per cent and on trans bay service, 9.54 per cent. Commute book sales of trans bay revenue for any single day was up 6.63 per cent and on trans bay service, 9.54 per cent. Commute book sales of $173,055 in September, 1965. Of the total, revenue on East Bay lines was up 6.63 per cent and on transbay service, 9.54 per cent.

Nationally, the industry showed a passenger revenue increase of O.10 per cent and in revenue record was set for intercity Bay express lines Oct. 7, as a new revenue record was set for intercity service of $8,286.08 for the day. The previous record of $3,233.61 was tallied on Jan. 14.

**Two new revenue records set by District**

Brisk transbay travel on Friday, Oct. 14, gave the District its highest level of transbay revenue for any single day of operation — a total of $20,957. The previous high was reached May 20, with revenue of $20,935.44 collected. Flags also flew with a flurry on East Bay express lines Oct. 7, as a new revenue record was set for intercity service of $8,286.08 for the day. The previous record of $3,233.61 was tallied on Jan. 14.

Four incumbent directors were returned to office this month by a substantial majority of voters.

Three of the incumbents faced opposition at the polls.

Col. Robert M. Copeland, of Kensington, a director at large, won an overwhelming majority in both Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Unofficial returns gave him 161,431 votes in Alameda County against the 82,426 for his opponent, J. Howard Arnold of Berkeley. In West Contra Costa County, the vote for Copeland was 25,561, compared to 11,412 for Arnold.

As final official figures were being tabulated, Vice President John L. McDonnell, of Oakland, had a five to one majority over his opponent in Ward III, Hector Reyna of Oakland. McDonnell's vote stood at 57,371, as against 11,514 for Reyna.

William J. Bettencourt, of San Leandro, representing Ward IV, had a three to one lead over his nearest opponent. The unofficial count stood at 48,218 votes for Bettencourt, and 17,507 for John T. Muldowney, of Oakland.

The three who won contested elections have been directors since the District was created by voters in 1956. A fourth incumbent, E. Guy Warren, of Hayward, director of Ward V, was reelected without opposition, polling 45,753 votes.

**In Memoriam**

A. J. KLIMAX, who at 100 was the oldest pensioner on AC Transit rolls, died Oct. 14 at Forestville. He worked as a car repairman at Central carhouse from 1908 until he was pensioned in 1938.

CHARLIE C. STEWARD, 69, street car operator from 1924 until he switched to bus driving in 1947, died Oct. 7. He was pensioned in 1959.

FREDERICK W. COOK, 77, machinist from 1917 until pensioned in 1954, died Sept. 16.

HENRY "CHARLES" HANSON, 70, street car operator from 1927 until 1948; a bus driver from 1948 until 1950 and a trainman for the next eight years, until he returned to driving in 1958, died Oct. 28. He retired in 1961.
Bus driver works in double harness

It might be a rare bus driver who can harness a horse, but it's a rarer one yet who can completely make the harness, right down to the last buckle.

Glen D. Fowler, Emeryville Division operator, has varied hobbies, with the fashioning of scaled-down horse trappings — an offshoot of a major interest in "building" articles from leather.

His rigs include padded leather horse collars, hand-carve double tree, tongue, neck yoke and all of the straps, buckles and reins needed for his toy horses to pull the "covered wagon" lamps he puts together for sale.

Drawing on memories of when his father had a rural mail delivery route in Kansas, Fowler insists on perfection in the gear. He uses metal towel racks, for instance, in making the 42 buckles required for a set of harness for two plastic horses.

He uses manufactured covered wagon kits for the lamps, but is making his own miniature buggy, to a one-fifth scale, for a horse he already has harnessed and "ready to go."

Fowler was introduced to leather work by another operator in 1948 and immediately was captured by the satisfaction of watching something "take shape in my hands."

"I sure remember that first wallet. I gave it such a whang I knocked a hole right through it."

Since then, Fowler has turned out countless hand-tooled wallets, more than 50 purses, four gunbelts and holsters, along with the miniature harnesses.

Always good with his hands, he especially likes to work with leather because he can "see it come to life." But he also does some woodwork in his shop behind his home at 621 43rd St., Richmond, and has the special gratification of his wife for some new garage wall cabinets.

She shares his enthusiasm for another hobby, model trains and the "transportation system" he is setting up in one section of the shop.

A bus driver since Sept. 1, 1944, Fowler probably is one of the biggest operators behind the wheel. He figures his weight at "about 21/2s" — meaning 250 pounds — and adds candidly:

"I was a fat little boy. I've always been fat. But my health is good and I can put a bus any place it's supposed to go."

HITCHING UP — With one team harnessed and "ready to go," Operator Glen Fowler shows details of rigs he makes as part of leather "building" hobby. The double harness has 42 hand-made buckles, is authentic to last detail.

A lot of time!
Years count up
For two friends

Two District veterans, who started out together on the streetcars 43 years ago, have decided to wrap up their careers at about the same time and head for Florida and leisure time.

For Carl H. Brooks, top of the seniority list at AC Transit, retirement plans came as a surprise — even to him.

"I just suddenly decided I was tired of working and made up my mind I was going to quit, so I did — never even said anything to my wife about it," Brooks explained at his home, 1824 Reliez Valley Rd., Lafayette.

In contrast, Ernest "Ernie" Burgess, 413 61st St., Oakland, had been planning to ask for his pension for several months. He had a good-bye party this Spring and has since been kidded by his fellow workers because he still was on the job.

Both worked together in their early days with Key System. Burgess was on the front end of a street car out of Western Car barn and Brooks was his conductor.

Brooks, who went to work in April, 1923, switched to bus driving in 1926 and rounded out his career on the Alcatraz line (No. 17).

History repeated itself most noticeably for him when he drove the first bus through the new Webster St. tube to Alameda in February, 1963, as he did when the old Posey tube opened on a dark October morning in 1928.

On his first trip, it was 5 a.m., dark, he was alone, and it was "kind of scary." The second trip was in the glare of sunshine, television and newspaper cameramen and a caravan of automobiles waiting to follow Carl through the tube.

Both Brooks and Burgess have plans of heading for Florida early next year.

Burgess went to work in February, 1924, on a ferry boat overhaul, and two weeks later, transferred to the street cars. He moved to bus driving in 1936.

As the man who helped keep commute buses on the line at the Transbay Transit Terminal, for the past 10 years, he figures he's best known as a "parking lot attendant."
... a number of young people boarded the bus. After they had paid their fares, the driver announced that if they got on the bus the next day and gave him quarters, he would give them "pennies in change". my wife told me about this and reported that the young people were quite annoyed about the whole performance and that she could not appreciate the attitude of our children and their complaints. everyone riding the bus should be encouraged to give the proper change. but to regard the use of quarters for a 15 cent fare as unreasonable - that is carrying things a bit too far ...

( Agree. - Ed.)

James A. Morrison
Oakland
* * *

We just returned from a Job's Daughters convention in Long Beach. we were driven there by H. B. Robertson. It was a delightful trip and much of that was due to the thoughtful and courteous bus driver. It was like having another chaperone. At all times he behaved in a gentlemanly manner and his patience with our girls was unending. most important of all, his driving was the best. He knew his vehicle and the road ...

Mrs. R. M. Milan
Oakland
* * *

I feel you should know that the current regular operator of the 42 Blair bus is outstanding. one to be commended for her pleasantness, thoughtfulness of her passengers and initiative. Her name, I'm told, is Mrs. Helen Pitts. Mrs. Pitts has not only pleasantly greeted her passengers, but she has religiously waited at Oakland and Highland Avenues for the arrival of the transbay Piedmont-Highland CX to pick up from five to seven passengers. On behalf of other riders, who I feel certain feel the same way, please extend to Mrs. Pitts our sincere thanks for outstanding service ...

John T. Beales
Piedmont
* * *

... I would like to take this opportunity to bring to your attention the splendid courtesy at all times of one of your bus operators (O. A. Donais) ...

Mrs. Ethel Roberts
Oakland
* * *

... for some three plus years I have been a commuting passenger. I have ridden on many different buses and with many different drivers. Without exception I have found your drivers to be courteous, careful and well trained. Patience also seems to be an attribute with which they are endowed which is frequently exhibited under trying conditions of traffic problems and unreasonable passengers ...

T. C. Garrick
San Francisco

HAZARDS — Importance of alert defensive driving is dramatized for bus drivers during simulated rainstorm.

"Winterizing" AC Transit

It's that time of year again, when weather puts a test on the skill of District operators and when it's "all-out" with all departments to keep passengers and buses on the safe side of statistics.

And AC Transit drivers headed into the rainy season with an enviable record of accident reduction tucked under their belts.

To remind operators to "winterize" their driving practices, the safety department issued a "when-the-rains come" bulletin for all drivers, and also simulated, with photographs, some of the problems to be faced.

Summarized, the hazards that accompany wet weather add up to these conclusions:

- Wet streets require more distance to stop.
- More caution is required when approaching intersections.
- A safe following distance must be maintained.

"Remember the other fellow has the same problem of reduced visibility that you have," G. G. Wadsworth, District safety engineer, advised bus operators.

"However, he may not be observing Defensive Driving Practices, so operate your equipment as if you expected him to make a quick stop, beat the signal, cut in on you, or other hazardous driving procedures, and be prepared to exercise all the defensive driving skill you possess to prevent an accident."

During the fiscal year which ended June 30, the District's accident rate dropped by 12.6 per cent below the previous year. And another reduction of 3.4 per cent was recorded in the previous fiscal year.
At an adjourned regular meeting Oct. 26, the Board of Directors:

- Directed Attorney for the District to reply to correspondence initiated by County District Attorney's office in connection with prior years' election costs, on motion of Vice President McDonnell.
- Declined to extend western end of Fruitvale Ave. line, as requested by area residents, because of additional expense, on motion of Director Berk.
- Approved procedure for developing agreement with Division 192 of the Carmen's Union to changes in existing pension plan, on motion of Director Rinehart.

At a regular meeting Nov. 9, the Board of Directors:

- Authorized payment of $900 special assessment to American Transit Association, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Approved $250 increase in semiannual dues to Oakland Chamber of Commerce, on motion of Director Rinehart.

A united response to United Bay Area Crusade

Workers, who traditionally "dig deep" to help others in need, were backing the line this month with over $17,406 pledged to United Crusade.

With the drive almost completed, 109 employees also had pledged one hour's pay each month as their "Fair Share" of giving - a 24 per cent increase over last year. They are:

Executive and General Offices

Emeryville Division


Mechanical: Mario Benassi, R.T. Abraham.

Seminary Division