District launches
New attack on
Air pollution

More people out of cars;
Improved bus exhaust system
Operating economies Expected from new Computerized program

A computerized program, to reduce costs and improve operating efficiency, will be tested by AC Transit in partnership with the Federal government. The program initially will involve servicing and maintenance of coaches and inventory and stores.

It will employ the latest of electronic equipment and computer programming to collect, analyze and report data valuable for management decisions on dispatching buses and tighter control of maintenance costs. It also is designed to improve control of inventory and stores and hopefully will reduce total on-hand inventory.

A Federal grant for $189,242 is covering two-thirds of estimated project costs of $270,364. The project will take full advantage of a government-funded program underway at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio, to develop an overall computer system for all phases of bus transit operation.

The project involves installation of on-site electronic data collection equipment, from which information will be fed into a computer for processing and print-out of various analytical reports. The equipment will replace manual procedures and permit accumulation of additional information now too costly to compile.

For the first time, total maintenance and service expense of each individual coach will be available, leading to operating economies through more effective dispatching of buses.

The program also is expected to cut labor costs in stores and reduce money tied up in inventory.

First services are expected to be in operation by April 1.

District moves ahead in smog fight

Efforts to reduce air pollution were accelerated by the District this month with emphasis on these fronts:

• Testing of new types of propulsion systems and devices, including an anti-smog kit, to reduce to zero the minimal amount of pollution now attributed to diesel-burning buses.

• Stepped-up activity to increase bus riding, since each coach full of passengers removes 40 to 45 cars from streets—and automobiles cause between 75 and 90 percent of air pollution.

Although District equipment is well within local exhaust control standards, AC Transit is looking at other propulsion systems or methods which might erase deadly smog, it was pointed out by Alan L. Bingham, general manager.

Anti-smog kit

One major step will be the testing of a new diesel engine converter kit on four different types of buses this year.

The EIP (Environment Improvement Program) package has been developed by General Motors Corp., in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The modified engine and exhaust system is expected to offer substantial improvements in eliminating pollutants, smoke, noise and odor. It achieves these low noise and low pollution qualities by means of a needle injector valve, catalytic muffler, air induction system located in rear window, and rubber engine mountings.

The combined package is expected to reduce hydrocarbons by up to 90 percent, carbon monoxide by 50 percent, and nitrous oxides by 17 percent.

Looking into the future of new, smog-free propulsion systems, the District is participating in a federally-financed steam engine test and also is keenly interested in electric power.

For cleaner air

"However, the most immediate new power plant on the horizon is the gas turbine engine," Bingham said. "General Motors expects to be in production with the gas turbine in two years."

"At the same time, they also expect to turn out a gas turbine engine conversion system, so existing equipment can be changed over."

Clean exhaust

Bingham pointed out the District uses the highest quality of fuel available and keeps rigid preventative maintenance schedules, with result coaches burn relatively clean exhaust.

"Without a sound preventative maintenance program, anything we did would be of little consequence," Bingham said.

"As it is, public transit can play an important role in reducing peak-hour congestion and helping to clean up air," the transit executive pointed out.

By dipping into neighborhoods, then taking to freeways for a fast, direct ride, District buses are able to provide the type of service that competes favorably with the private automobile.

"Everybody who is caught in congestion, like the daily traffic jam on the Bay Bridge, knows that air pollution is not a laughing matter, but a serious threat to the health of the area."

"Ridership on AC Transit buses has increased 20 percent since 1960. On the Bay Bridge, buses carry nearly 50 percent of riders now crossing in commute hours."

"We are trying to increase this proportion, upgrading service, expanding into new neighborhoods and adding additional express buses."

Bingham also pointed out close and effective coordination with the future Bay Area Rapid Transit network was vital, to provide greater convenience and encourage use of public transit.
Oldsters enjoy Low bus fare

It was good news for elderly residents this month—and warm thanks for AC Transit—as senior citizens took advantage of a 10-cent fare on East Bay buses during non-peak hours.

"It is just wonderful," one woman wrote. "Happiness is doing for others." As letters and phone calls accumulated, it was evident that many oldsters were grateful for the lower fare.

"Now one doesn't have to sit on the benches in place of taking a ride on the bus," one senior citizen said.

Economically, the reduced transit fares are important to persons on old age security, who receive only a small amount for transportation allowance. The basic East Bay adult fare is 25 cents. "You bet I had to pinch pennies to make the bus," one 73-year-old wrote. "I can't carry too much groceries at one time and it was hard for me to save enough money to ride the bus to a store where I could get cheaper food..."

Bus operators reported a banner number of oldsters riding buses during the early part of the month, with major lines showing as much as a 50 percent increase in elderly passengers. With rainy weather, however, riding returned to normal. A survey, taken before the reduced fare program went into effect Jan. 1, showed the lower rate must attract 150 percent more riders this year to prevent serious revenue loss.

The survey of adult riders on East Bay lines showed an average 12,104 fares collected from elderly persons per day. If senior citizen riding continued at the same rate during the year-long experiment, AC Transit stands to lose $365,626 from the fare reduction.

Oldsters seeking the lower fare contending riding would increase enough to make up for the revenue loss.

Public Information Manager Appointed

Mrs. Virginia Dennison was appointed public information manager for the District this month, becoming one of the first women transportation executives in the industry.

Mrs. Dennison was named to the post by Alan L. Bingham, general manager. She succeeds Dennis J. O'Connor, who resigned to become director of communications for a La Jolla investment firm.

A former bay area newspaper woman, Mrs. Dennison has been with the transit district over nine years, serving as assistant public information manager and news bureau manager. She also is editor of Transit Times.

Mrs. Dennison previously worked for the Oakland Tribune, San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Examiner and newspapers in Richmond and Pittsburg. She was editor of the Oakland Tribune motor journey series before leaving the newspaper to write a story of East Bay transportation for the District in 1966.

She lives at 20 Marston Rd., Orinda.
The "Old Ladies Comfort"

A photograph of one of Oakland's most unusual trolley cars has been added to AC Transit's historical collection by Ray Laughrey, insurance and investment executive.

Laughrey found the picture, taken in 1908, as he was closing his home to leave on a trip around the world. He's in the photograph as a young lad in knickers, standing with his mother, Mrs. Effie Laughrey, on the left, and his grandmother, Mrs. Myra Dishman.

The photo shows one of the cars of the West 12th Street line, known to its riders as the "Old Lady's Comfort."

The trolley was depressed in the middle so ladies, with their long, cumbersome skirts, need take only one upward step to board.

The open middle section had seats which faced outward and was much in favor with women riders. However, during rainy weather, umbrellas were needed for protection against the elements, according to Vernon Sappers, railway historian.

It was possible, of course, to enter closed elevated sections at either end, but this required two more steps.

Ten such cars were built in the Key System's Emeryville shops in 1905 and were called "Kelly" cars after their designer, W. F. Kelly, general superintendent, Sappers said.

The Laughrey photo was taken at 12th and Chestnut Streets, long before the street was paved. Laughrey remembers the motorman as "polite and nice. If he saw us coming he would stop and wait in front of our house.

The street car line was an antecedent of the District's present Line 88 and then, as now, operated to the Southern Pacific's 16th Street depot. Today it operates from Berkeley; originally it connected the elegant Victorian section of west Oakland with downtown Oakland at 12th and Broadway.

Built as the Central Ave. Railway in 1893, the electric road was one of the first three lines to be consolidated by F. M. "Borax" Smith into the Oakland Transit Co. in 1898. The original car house was at 12th and Kirkham St.

Share of use tax Distributed to cities

The local share of the use tax paid by AC Transit on its recent purchase of 45 new buses has been distributed among cities and unincorporated territory in the East Bay.

One percent of the tax was distributed, on basis of mileage traveled in respective areas, under an unusual arrangement approved by the State Board of Equalization. The other four percent of the paid use tax goes to the State.

The cities' share amounts to: Emeryville, $225.58; Oakland, $6,914.09; Berkeley, $1,450.42; Albany, $249.36; El Cerrito, $350.96; Richmond, $907.38; Alameda, $676.03; Piedmont, $120.52; San Leandro, $935.08; Hayward, $761.92; San Pablo, $101.17; unincorporated, Contra Costa County, $334.12; unincorporated, Alameda County, $503.48.

Driver scores with gospel music

A wide, wide world of fame and travel may have opened for Seminary Division bus driver Milton Starks.

Starks, 32, is a member of the Tones of Faith, a music sextette highly diversified in their artistry.

The gospel singers, who have vowed to dedicate themselves to religious music, have been invited to join another gospel singer, Mahalia Jackson, for concerts and recordings.

The singer heard them at her performance at Oakland Coliseum and had them do six numbers. Starks, who plays the steel guitar, was featured in a solo.

Miss Jackson decided they fit the demands she needs in her work and asked them to join her in future concerts, in the United States and possibly in Europe.

Starks said he started playing the steel guitar in 1957 because "I just love music. Then I taught myself the steel guitar about 1963."

A former bus driver in Louisiana, Starks went to work for AC Transit eight years ago. He drove on Line 83 for some time, but now is working transbay Line R from San Leandro in the morning and Line R-Fairway Park in the afternoon, with a school trip in between.

Central dispatcher promoted to new post

Robert J. Shamoon, 42, has been appointed to a newly created labor and industrial post, in line with management policy.

As labor relations analyzer in the Personnel Department, Shamoon has duties covering personnel functions, the health and welfare program and labor relations problems. He had been one of the "eyes and ears" of Central Dispatch since 1968.

Shamoon, of 569 Ginger Ave., Hayward, joined Key System Transit Lines as a bus driver in 1954. He became a dispatcher at Seminary Division in 1957 and a supervisor in 1962. In his spare time, Shamoon hunts deer, elk and bear in Montana. He's also a trap shooter and a bowler.

Emeryville drivers on top

Emeryville drivers topped the safety goal in December with a tally of 13,269 miles per accident.
NEW EMPLOYEES

The District welcomed these new workers in October, November and December.
"THE BRASS"—Officers of the AC Transit Management Association include, at left: John Kraicar, treasurer; Robert Shamoon, president; Don Larson, secretary, and Joe Galindo, vice president. Talking "shop" at right are: George Ziegenfuss, chairman of organizing committee and elected governor; Lou Bailey, governor; Alan L. Bingham, general manager, and Billy Lyle, governor. Les Minear, also a governor, is missing from picture.

Management group

Spouses (or friends) will be guests at a Valentine dinner planned by the new AC Transit Management Association on Feb. 13 to mark Valentine Day in appropriate "hearts and flowers" manner.

The association, organized to give supervisory personnel an opportunity to meet and discuss mutual interests, rolled off in high after a meeting in December.

Elected as officers were: Robert J. Shamoon, president; Joe M. Galindo, vice president; Don S. Larson, secretary; John A. Krajcar, treasurer.

Board of governors includes George W. Ziegenfuss and Billy S. Lyle, one-year terms; Les H. Minear and Lou V. Bailey, two-year terms. The past president also will become a board member for a one-year term.

Initially, four meetings a year are planned by the group.


PARTICIPANTS—Attending first meeting of new AC Transit Management Association were, from left: W. E. Howe, W. E. Antwheler, M. W. Hancock, W. F. Schmid, H. D. White and H. J. Dupuis.


Passenger revenue up during November

Fare box revenue from East Bay and transbay lines was on the upswing during November, but number of passengers carried declined during the month.

Passenger revenue totaled $1,250,272, an increase of $78,852 or 6.73 percent over revenue of $1,171,420 collected in November, 1968. On East Bay lines, revenue tallied $710,745, an increase of 5.90 percent over year-ago figures of $671,147. Transbay revenue was $539,527, up 7.85 percent compared to November, 1968, total of $500,273.

Commute book sales were $239,167, a 16.8 percent increase over year-ago sales of $204,797.

The number of passengers carried during the month totaled 4,167,848, a decrease of 3.17 percent below the riding count of 4,304,132 for November a year ago. On East Bay lines, the riding total was 3,042,491, down 3.01 percent over the count of 3,136,872 made the same month in 1968. Transbay riding showed a 3.59 percent decrease, with a total of 1,125,357 compared to year-ago figures of 1,167,260.

Operation costs during the month came to $1,525,203, an increase of $37,192 or 2.50 percent over expenses of $1,488,011 for November, 1968. The District operated 1,948,634 miles of service, a decrease of 19,612 miles or 1.00 percent below year-ago mileage of 1,968,246.

Total revenue of $1,744,565 was sufficient to cover operational costs, depreciation and bond debt requirements.

The transit industry nationally indicated a riding decrease for the month of 5.39 percent.
Actions of the Board

• At an adjourned regular meeting Dec. 30, the Board of Directors:
  • Referred bids for computer equipment to General Manager for study, on motion of Director Coburn.
  • Authorized expenditure up to $8,000 for testing diesel engine converter kits on four buses, on motion of Director McDonnell (See story, Pg. 3).
  • Approved attendance of staff members at Maintenance Efficiency Award Conference and American Transit Association Executive Conference, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
  • Authorized use of 350 coaches in advertising campaign and installation of special inside frames, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
  • Approved participation of District in study project relating to local and feeder services in outlying areas, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
  • Authorized appointment of staff member to advisory group of ABAG Regional Transportation Planning Committee, reaffirmed board policy on composition of committee, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
  • Approved extension of Line 93-San Lorenzo to serve Del Monte, Inc., on motion of Director Bettencourt.

At a regular meeting Jan. 14, the Board of Directors:
• Elected William E. Berk as president, on motion of Director McDonnell.
• Elected E. Guy Warren as Vice president, on motion of Director Coburn.
• Directed preparation of letter, reaffirming Board position on transit representation on ABAG Regional Transportation Committee, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Authorized Assistant General Manager for Administration to serve on ATA-TAA committee on standardization, on motion of Director Coburn.
• Approved advertising for bids for furnishing bus washers, on motion of Director Coburn.
• Authorized General Manager to confer with U. S. Department of Transportation officials on grant applications, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
• Adopted resolution of intent to levy taxes, in accordance with State code, on motion of Director Copeland.