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Transit-Times



New buses have more leg room

New buses may be "most expensive"

Residents in suburban areas of Alameda and Contra Costa counties who are receiving special bus extension service to BART stations may be riding in the most expensive coaches in the urban transit industry.

Bids for 36 deluxe buses, opened this month, clearly showed how inflation has hit coach manufacturers.

Apparent low bidder was Flxible Co. with a bid of \$71,108 per bus delivered. General Motors, the only other bidder, entered a price of \$75,144.85.

Award of a contract is based on final approval of a Federal grant, which would pay 80 percent of costs. The other 20 percent would be paid from sales taxes generated in the area.

The grant is expected to cover costs of 30 shelters, 30 benches, signs, poles, fare boxes, radios and other items.

Contract bus service

BART has contracted with AC Transit to operate bus service from train stations to Livermore-Pleasanton-Dublin; Alamo-Danville-San Ramon; Pittsburg-Antioch-Oakley - Brentwood; Martinez-Pleasant Hill and Pinole.

At BART's request, the buses are to be comfortable suburban types with a raised deck. All seats, the large, recliner type, will face forward. Floors are to be carpeted and entry and exit is to be through the front door.

The 45-passenger coaches are to be similar to those operated by Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District, with one major difference.

The new coaches are to have automatic temperature control systems to keep temperatures within one degree of 68°, whether that requires air conditioning, heat or outside ventilation.

The climate unit was developed by Chicago Transit Authority and Vapor Corp., and now is in use in Chicago.

Indicating the increased costs of labor, materials and parts, Fresno Transit received an apparent low bid early this month from AM General Corp. of \$66,895 per unit delivered, for a standard 51-passenger bus with air conditioning. General Motors, the only other bidder, came in with \$68,542 per bus delivered. The same bus a year ago had a unit price of \$42,500.

Chicago Transit received a low bid on Dec. 6 of \$64,768 for a standard bus with climate control. Twenty months earlier, a similar bus was bid at \$42,000.

In the spring of 1974, Golden Gate Transit took delivery of 30 buses at a unit price of \$56,000 and, last summer, exercised an option for another 30 at a "bargain" increase of only \$2,000 per bus.

AC Transit's last order for 120 standard, 40-foot buses, without air conditioning, went to Flxible on Feb. 27, 1974, at a price of \$42,372 per bus delivered.

As a result of the increasing number of buses being purchased by American transit properties, manufacturers are insisting on a maximum of 270 days to complete delivery without penalty. Previously, specifications called for completion of delivery within 180 days.

Employees support United Crusade

Final figures from last Fall's United Bay Area Crusade (UBAC) indicate that employees contributed \$17,078.

Campaign Chairman Walter Martin said the figure is "extraordinary, considering the two-month strike, our raging inflation and other economic factors involved." He said the total is approximately 70 percent more than early projections.

"Superbus" preliminary specifications Out to manufacturers for review

Preliminary specifications have gone out to American and European bus manufacturers for a high capacity bus offering more seats for riders while holding down expenses and keeping fares stabilized.

Seven transit properties are considering an initial joint order of approximately 160 articulated "Superbus" coaches for use in different areas of the country.

Participating properties include: AC Transit; Chicago Transit Authority; Golden Gate Bridge, Highway and Transportation District; the Port Authority of Allegheny County in Pittsburgh; San Diego Transit; Southern California Rapid Transit District and Sacramento Transit Authority.

The public already indicated a strong preference for an articulated bus as a result of demonstrations held in different cities last year.

Longer bus preferred

Rider surveys aboard the 54-foot-long Maschinenfabrik-Augsburg - Nurnberg (M.A.N.) bus showed 91 percent preferred the "bus that bends in the middle" to the regular, 40-foot-long coach. The M.A.N. bus holds 64 seated passengers and 80 standees.

The highest degree of rider preference favored the larger windows and wider doors. Ninety-six percent preferred the bigger M.A.N. windows.

Ninety-one percent preferred the 49-inch-wide doors which permit simultaneous boarding and unloading.

Eighty-one percent thought the M.A.N. bus was easier to board, although three steps are involved and the height of the bus floor at the front door actually is 3-1/4 inches higher than current conventional U.S. models.

A majority also preferred the ease of movement on the articulated bus, smoothness of ride, noise level inside the bus, comfort, softness and width of

seats, leg room and the feeling of space, and comfortable temperature.

All bus drivers polled liked the way the bus handled and many felt its turning response was superior to the 40-foot coach. Ease of steering also was mentioned, as were good acceleration, braking and good curb pull-out.

Nine year experiment

AC Transit, which has experimented with an articulated coach since 1966, initiated the cooperative effort between the transit industry and the Federal government in order to develop a superbus for the American market.

U.S. firms asked to review and comment on specifications include: General Motors; Flxible Co.; Crown Coach Corp.; Eagle International, Inc.; McDonnell Douglas Corp. and Raad International.

Other manufacturers who indicated interest include three from Germany, two from Canada, Volvo of Sweden and a firm in Belgium. Buses which bend in the middle have been in use in Europe for a number of years.

A Volvo bus also was demonstrated in West Coast cities last Fall and similar passenger response surveys were taken.

65 passenger coach

The end product of the cooperative effort will be a coach seating approximately 65 passengers.

Specifications have been developed by the State of California Department of Transportation, after input from participating transit systems and bus manufacturers.

THE COVER—Photo shows more leg room available in new Flxible buses — three inches more than in standard GM models. Nearly all the 120 new coaches were expected to be in street service by the first of March. The District's newest buses are 40 feet long, 102 inches wide and seat 48 passengers.



WHEELS AND THINGS—Anne Vicary, left, and Jane Powell, right, are enthusiastic about their new jobs, which include sweeping out buses and moving them around the yard.



Maintenance women like their jobs

Take four lovely and charming women. Have them come to work at 8 p.m. Have them work until 4 a.m. Give them mid-week days off. Give them brooms and dust pans and cleaning rags. Dress them in jump suits and wrap bandanas around their heads. Send them out to clean buses in dark yards, pump fuel in the rain, change oil in the wind and cold. Then, ask how they like their jobs. The answer is — they love it.

Isabel Dominguez, Jane Powell, Tomasita "Tommy" Tanuz and Anne Vicary are women in AC Transit's maintenance department performing work to keep equipment in order.

Jane, Tomasita and Anne are new to AC Transit. Isabel is the veteran of the crew, with seniority dating back to the middle of World War II.

Jane, 23, once worked as a mechanic, rebuilding transmissions, but left that job because it didn't pay enough. She took a job pumping gas until she was hired by AC Transit. Her ambition is to become a diesel mechanic.

When she's not working, Jane listens to music, practices her guitar, or works on the engines of a truck and a car she owns.

Anne, 29, began her liking for engines by racing motorcycles. She admits to finishing second or third several times, "And I even finished first, once!"

As a racer, she had to learn how to maintain engines so, when a friend offered her a job building cylinder heads, it seemed natural to accept.

Later, she worked in an auto repair shop rebuilding motors, repairing brakes and tuning-up engines. "I worked on everything but transmissions," she says.

She originally applied for a bus driver job but, in view of her background, was offered a maintenance job. Later, she hopes to work on engines.

"Tommy" Tanuz, 28, the only one of the four without a background in mechanics, candidly admits she was "just looking for a job. But now I love it," she says, particularly since the night shift allows her to spend days with her two children.

Isabel began her transit career as a teenager and is the last of the women who worked in maintenance during the war. She started out in the unit room, cleaning spark plugs, making wire, and refueling fire extinguishers.

About 15 years ago she switched to a bus cleaning job.

PUMP AND POLISH—Miss Vicary, left photo, shows she can handle the fuel island job while "Tommy" Tanuz, right photo, helps keep coaches spic and span inside.



THEY TAKE THE CAKE—Mario "Poncho" Ponchione, left, and John Zorman, right, joined the select circle of drivers with 25 years of driving without a chargeable accident. They became the fourth and fifth members of the exclusive club when they were honored for their achievement recently.



Oakland police commend District employees For cooperation in "Radio Alert" program

AC Transit employees continue to receive plaudits from the Oakland Police Department for the drivers' participation in "Operation Radio Alert."

Under Radio Alert, drivers of any vehicle with on-board radios are asked to report crimes, accidents or other incidents which they may see in the course of driving on Oakland streets.

Bus drivers are an important part of the program and, during recent weeks, have reported many incidents to police.

Among drivers singled out by the Police Department were Dennis L. Treadaway and William C. Morris, Jr.

Treadaway witnessed an armed robbery and the shooting of the robbery victim and immediately radioed information about the crime.

His prompt action allowed police to rush the victim to a hospital and provided them with clues to find at

least one suspect.

Morris also witnessed a shooting and was able to supply police with a description which led to the capture of the suspect in the case.

Other employees whose actions were noted by police in the department's monthly bulletin were:

Donald R. Cowden who reported a shooting; William P. McGuinness, Daryl R. James and supervisor David D. Hightman, all of whom reported possible burglaries in progress; and supervisor Sterling Stewart, who spotted a possible kidnapping.

Employee wages upped Nine cents per hour

A cost-of-living allowance of nine cents per hour is being paid to all hourly employees as of late in January, in accordance with the District's contract with Division 192, Amalgamated Transit Union.

Salaried employees are receiving an equivalent percentage increase.

The adjustments were based on recent changes in the U.S. Government cost-of-living index.

The current increase, the 14th since the cost of living program was initiated in January, 1969, keeps AC Transit employees among the highest paid transit industry workers in the nation.

Three regular divisions Top safe-driving goal

Drivers from all three regular operating divisions topped their safe-driving goal during January.

Leading the pack were drivers from Richmond Division with an average of 19,650 safe-driving miles per accident.

Emeryville drivers scored 15,418 miles, with Seminary drivers close behind at 15,215 miles per accident.



THE WAY IT WAS—Emeryville, and the then Key System yard were different in August, 1947, when this aerial photo was taken. Some new structures have been added; some frontage property along San Pablo Avenue (center, left) has been lost to commercial development; and many, many more coaches are now parked on the lot. Also long gone is the old Oakland Oaks Baseball Park, center, right.

Death takes four pensioners

Four pensioners, all transit veterans, died recently.

Art contest posters To be displayed on buses

Richmond artists, both young and old, will have a chance to win three scholarships and to have their work displayed on buses as the result of a cooperative venture between the Richmond Art Center and AC Transit.

A contest, which requires original art work to be submitted by March 31, will provide scholarships in three categories: children 12 years of age or younger; teenagers 13 to 18; and seniors, 50 years of age and older.

Winning works in each category will be reproduced and displayed on Dial-A-Ride buses.

Winning entries also will be displayed at the Richmond Art Center and at AC Transit division and executive offices.

John M. DeCoite, a retired bus driver who lived in San Leandro, died Dec. 31 at the age of 72. He began his career Aug. 13, 1941, and retired June 1, 1967.

He is survived by his widow, Mary. Earl J. McCann, also a former driver, died Jan. 7. His driving career spanned nearly 30 years, from May 19, 1944, to his retirement on Jan. 1, 1974.

McCann, 58 at his death, lived in San Leandro and is survived by his widow, Ona, and a daughter, Mrs. Jackie Banert.

Otto W. Rehms, 81, of Moraga, died Dec. 17. An electric worker, Rehms was employed Jan. 17, 1939, and retired June 1, 1958. His survivors include his widow, Anna, and a daughter-in-law, Mrs. Robert Rehms.

Dirk J. Van Mourik of Albany died Dec. 29 at age 77. He was a utility service worker whose career began Nov. 8, 1932, and ended with his retirement on Feb. 1, 1963.

Van Mourik is survived by his widow, Marjorie.

East Bay figures up, transbay down

East Bay bus lines continued to show growth in revenue and patronage figures during December; however, transbay lines show losses when compared to December of a year ago.

Total passenger revenue for December was \$1,207,232, down \$69,772 or 5.5 percent below the \$1,277,004 collected during December, 1973. Transbay revenue of \$500,670 was down \$126,720 or 20.2 percent below the \$627,390 dropped into fare boxes a year ago. East Bay revenue, however, was \$706,562, up \$56,948 or 8.8 percent above the \$649,614 collected during December, 1973.

AC Transit buses carried 4,235,550 passengers during December, down 55,616 riders, or 1.3 percent from the 4,291,166 carried during the month of December, 1973. Passenger losses were recorded on transbay lines, where patronage dropped 334,152 or 26.1 percent, down to 947,830 from the 1,281,982 who rode during the same month a year earlier. On East Bay lines, however, patronage for the month totaled 3,287,720, up 278,536 or 9.3 percent above the December, 1973, figure of 3,009,184.

Nationally, the transit industry indicated an increase of 5.44 percent in total passengers carried.

Operating costs during December were \$3,433,748, up \$909,524 or 36.0 percent above year-ago expenses of \$2,524,224. The system operated 2,441,309 miles of service during December, an increase of 229,755 miles or 10.4 percent above the 2,211,554 miles operated during December, 1973.

Total income of \$3,725,170 covered operational costs and left a surplus of \$52,885 after meeting full bond debt requirements.





Actions of the Board

At a adjourned regular meeting January 22, the Board of Directors:

- Directed staff to study and make recommendations on senior citizen fare structure, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

- Authorized travel authority for Attorney to Washington, D.C. conference, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

- Authorized change in level of service to be provided on Washington's birthday holiday, on motion of Director Berk.

* * *

At a regular meeting February 12, the Board of Directors:

- Referred bids for 36 45-passenger buses to management for evaluation and recommendations, on motion of Director Rinehart. (See story, Pg. 2)

- Awarded contract for furnishing bus transfers and identification checks to Globe Ticket Co., subject to compliance with specifications, on motion of Director Rinehart.

- Authorized General Manager to lease additional space in Latham Square Bldg. for use by Personnel Dept., on motion of Director Bettencourt.

- Authorized change in District's property insurance coverage to a total of \$20 million on all property and buses, and authorized purchase of policy providing up to \$50,000 liability coverage for bodily injury and property

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508 16th St., Oakland, California 94612
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Joseph McCord, Editor

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damage on District premises, on motion of Director Rinehart.

- Recognized the Metropolitan Transportation Commission as the designated recipient for Federal operating assistance under the National Mass Transportation Assistance Act of 1974, on motion of Director Rinehart.

- Adopted resolution expressing deep appreciation to William Bettencourt for his services as President of the Board, on motion of Director McDonnell.

AC Transit
Latham Square Building
Oakland, California 94612

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