Videll ends 41-year transit career

Summing up a 41-year career isn't a simple task.

For Richard P. Videll, retiring as superintendent of schedules, it may be even more complicated since he, almost literally, grew up working in transit.

Except for time off for Army service in World War II, Videll has been involved in East Bay transit operations since he was 18 years old. Then, just a few months out of Castlemont High School and with a course at Merritt Business School behind him, he became an $60 a month general office clerk by typing schedules, then worked into the highly specialized function of writing them. He considers the work very challenging, since elements of geography, time, equipment, and manpower must mesh with considerations of cost and efficiency.

One reward, he says, is in "standing out there and watching the buses actually operating over the route" as the aftermath of long, grueling hours of working out a schedule balancing maximum service with minimal equipment and manpower costs.

As to which period of the past 41 years has offered the most challenges, Videll quickly pin-points two: World War II transit operations and the district's expansion period of the past five years.

The war-time era, he said, was characterized not only by a shortage of operators and equipment, but by a mandate to provide service to shipyard workers. Gearing service to continually fluctuating shipyard production schedules often meant working around-the-clock, Videll remembers.

"The last five years have been really hectic, too," he said, "with conversion of service in connection with BART, new contract service, and expansion in existing service areas."

How will Videll, who has held the demanding position of superintendent of schedules for 10 years, manage to "gear down" to a life of leisure?

He and wife Sally, he says, have plans for traveling in the U.S. and Canada in their motor home. Also, they are looking forward to an April visit to Hawaii, with plans, later on, to visit Spain and Portugal, where they have ancestral ties.

But they'll maintain their long-time home in San Leandro, which they share with two of their four children: Mike, a college student; and Patricia, a high school senior. There are two older sons, Dan and Bob, plus three grandsons: Bob, Jr., 8; Paul, 6; and Tim, 4.

Operating plan project approved

Approval by the Board of Directors of a cooperative agreement with MTC has cleared the way for work to begin on a 15-month study which will form the basis for a five-year operating plan for the District.

The project — aimed at defining District goals and establishing service guide-line policies and services of the last seven years, and will provide projections for the future in such areas as fare revenue, funding, and marketing.

Patrons receive Valentine In form of free rides

Free rides have been the rule on all local bus lines in the Pittsburg-Antioch-Brentwood area for most of February.

"It's our way of saying we're sorry for any inconvenience caused by the interruption in service," according to Barbara Guise, chairman of the Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority.

Mrs. Guise also voiced assurance to local residents that the Transit Authority was not billed for bus service during the two-month period the contract service was interrupted.

Buses are back on local Lines 380, 381 and 382, but the fare boxes have not been operating since Feb. 6. Free rides will continue through Feb. 28.
Figures outline pay, benefits facts

A new three-year labor contract between AC Transit and Amalgamated Transit Union Division 192 went into effect late last month.

The new agreement returned drivers, maintenance men and clerical staff to work Jan. 29 after a ten-week work stoppage.

Drivers went back to work at a new hourly base wage of $8.35 — 32 cents more than they earned under the old contract. Similar raises, reflecting cost-of-living increases between mid-1977 and late November, were paid to other job classifications.

Mechanics' wages, for example, went up to a range of $7.95 to $9.70 an hour; clerks now earn $7.07; junior clerks, $6.81. Non-union employees also received comparable raises.

Cost-of-living

A full-percentage cost-of-living formula provides for continuing quarterly adjustments, during the remainder of the contract, which will raise wages to match increases in the federal government's Consumer Price Index.

Improvements in fringe benefits include revision of Table III of the pension plan to increase benefits by up to 8 percent for more senior employees retiring after age 61.

Benefits for current pensioners also were increased by up to $30 a month for those who retired before July, 1975.

Sick leave

Another new contract provision allows employees to receive pay while sick from the first day of an illness, provided they have accumulated sick leave on the District's records.

And employees who retire with unused accumulated sick leave now can receive a lump sum cash compensation of up to $1,600.

The new labor agreement provides that drivers who fail to report as assigned no longer will be suspended from work — but will lose only their daily guarantee. Drivers who "miss out" now can receive an assignment and pay for actual time worked.

Other additions to the contract include a paid prescription drug plan; a sixth week of vacation for employees with 30 years of service; and an additional "floating" holiday, bringing the total to 11 paid holidays a year.

The new agreement will be effective through June 30, 1980. Total cost of the three-year package is estimated to be $11.2 million.

Institute sets session

Bay Area Urban Transit Institute begins its second full year of seminars with an April 30-May 6 session jointly sponsored by AC Transit and three other Bay Area properties.

Averaging about 25 participants per session from area organizations and other properties farther afield, the Institute presents broad over-views of the varied functions which contribute to transit operations.

Other seminars will be in August and October.

Ridership figures rise

Four out of five passengers who made a habit of riding the buses before the recent work stoppage apparently have returned to using AC Transit.

The day after the strike ended — Jan. 30 — patronage was about 77 percent of the pre-strike level. Within the first post-strike week, ridership climbed to 85 percent of normal.

Patronage on weekdays hovered above the 80 percent level during the early part of this month, with fare box figures showing a steady increase.

On the weekends just after the end of the strike, ridership was as much as 90 percent of the level considered normal late last year.

Tri Delta Transit passengers to provide Survey comment on reactions to mini-bus

Tri Delta Transit riders in Eastern Contra Costa County will be judging the features of newly-developed buses during coming weeks.

Coaches specially designed for neighborhood service began regular service on routes in Pittsburg, Antioch and Brentwood on Feb. 13.

The Minibus, a 25-passenger vehicle now in service in other Contra Costa communities and in southern Alameda County, will be demonstrated in Tri Delta Transit service through Mar. 24.

The coach is 25-feet-long and features an air-conditioned interior, carpeting, and fabric-covered, bucket-type seats. It also has an extra-wide 48-inch door for easier boarding.

At a later date, a smaller 17-passenger Mercedes-Benz coach will be demonstrated in regular service. Also scheduled for road testing is an intermediate-size, 35-passenger bus of German design built by Gillig-Neoplan of Hayward.

During the demonstration, passengers will be asked to fill out survey cards to comment on vehicle features including boarding and disembarking ease, ride quality and noise levels, leg room and seating comfort.

Responses to the survey cards will assist the Eastern Contra Costa Transit Authority, which contracts with AC Transit for the Tri Delta service, in making selections of appropriate equipment for future transportation needs.
Residents of Kimber Park in Fremont began receiving Dial-A-Ride service Feb. 19, as AC Transit expanded its door-to-door service in District 2. Some 350 homes are being provided service in the off-peak hours from approximately 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. on weekdays, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturdays, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays. Dial-A-Ride buses serving Kimber Park, which lies east of Mission Blvd., connect with regular fixed route service on Line 24 at Paseo Padre Parkway and Driscoll Road.

Former driver, dispatcher
Howard V. Dolan dies at 63
Howard V. Dolan, a driver at Newark Division before his retirement in March, 1977, died Jan. 16 at age 63. In retirement, he had been living in the southern California community of Hemet. Dolan joined AC Transit as a driver at Richmond Division in late 1961, subsequently serving as a dispatcher at the same location from 1963 to 1968. Returning to driving duties, he served for a period of time at Seminary Division before his transfer to Newark.

He is survived by his widow, Marion; and five children: Howard, Jr.; Ronald; Richard; Thomas; and Janice.

Group schedules March dinner
AC Transit Management Association will hold a dinner meeting March 16 at The Elegant Farmer, Jack London Square.

For this first of its four 1978 meetings, District management personnel have invited Lawrence H. Dahms, executive director of MTC, to be guest speaker.

Marketing
New drivers learn how System works
New AC Transit drivers learn very early in their transit careers how marketing, maintenance and scheduling affect the bus operator’s daily routine.

In a day-long Trainee Indoctrination Program, incoming drivers meet face-to-face with transit professionals who are veterans of the various departments.

Old hands from Charter, Claims, Maintenance, Marketing and Schedule departments join the trainees in the calm atmosphere of the classroom. Road supervisors and central dispatchers also participate.

Department functions
Each expert explains what his department accomplishes and how that function affects the bus operator. Each also suggests ways in which operators contribute to the success of other departments.

Marketing’s Mike Curry, for example, delivers a lively lecture with a simple central theme: courteous, competent drivers create a positive public transit image.

“You are the Number One salespeople we have,” Curry tells trainees. “Marketing spearheads a sales effort, but you — the driver — actually sell that passenger on the bus.”

Info and advertising
In a well-polished performance, laced with humor and filled with facts, Curry outlines the public information and advertising responsibilities of Marketing Department.

He also describes how observant drivers help tell the transit story by passing on to Marketing tips about co-workers and riders that make entertaining reading in District publications and, sometimes, local newspapers or broadcast media.

In similar fashion, other indoctrination program participants expose new drivers to activities of each department and the cooperative effort which furthers the effectiveness of the District.

MARKETING
MESSAGE—New drivers eye District publications and view TV commercials while Marketing Department’s Mike Curry describes the public information effort. Instructors also employ question-and-answer periods to communicate the District’s transit story.
Actions of the Board

At an adjourned regular meeting Jan. 25, the Board of Directors:
- Awarded contract for furnishing portable building to Modular Facilities Leasing Company, subject to compliance with specifications, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized District participation in three sessions of the Bay Area Urban Transit Institute, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Authorized Acting General Manager to enter into agreement with MTC for Five Year Plan Development Program, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized minor re-routing of Line N-F, Fruitvale Avenue-San Francisco Express, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized inclusion of Kimber Park area of Fremont in Dial-A-Ride Zone 13, District 2, on motion of Director Bettencourt.

At an adjourned regular meeting Jan. 28 the Board of Directors:
- Adopted resolution authorizing execution of agreement between the District and Amalgamated Transit Union, Division 192, and granting non-union employees comparable increases in compensation and fringe benefits, on motion of Director Bettencourt.
- Authorized resumption of service beginning Jan. 29, on motion of Director Rinehart.

At a regular meeting Feb. 8, the Board of Directors:
- Approved resolution adopting California Environmental Quality Act guidelines, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Approved adjustment in compensation for Acting General Manager, on motion of Director Rinehart.
- Awarded contract for furnishing shelving materials and equipment to Intra Systems Corporation, subject to compliance with specifications, on motion of Director Bettencourt. (Continued on page 6)