Vierra vies as driver
And is Roadeo victor
Transit trends and topics

Board adopts new labor contract
After ATU Local 192 votes approval

AC Transit's Board of Directors gave final approval October 21 to a new collective bargaining agreement which will help contain overall operating costs even as union workers gain a salary increase.

The new contract provides for a 5.5 percent increase in salary for the remainder of this fiscal year, followed by four percent hikes in each of the ensuing two years. This would be applied to the $13 hourly base wage for drivers and corresponding rates for other represented workers.

Board President Linda Shepard notes that these incremental increases conform to the projections incorporated in AC Transit's Deficit Reduction Plan, adopted a year ago. Coupled with productivity improvements and cost-cutting measures already implemented or planned for the near future, this agreement should enable the District to end the current fiscal year with a budget that's nearly balanced, Shepard said.

Other measures aimed at improving AC Transit's fiscal situation include internal economies already adopted; reorganization of the workforce, aimed at generating greater efficiency; and productivity improvements garnered from the District's on-going facilities reconstruction program.

The new labor agreement resulted from months of negotiations between the District and Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 192, which represents some 1,900 of the system's transit workers. Its adoption comes nearly four months after the previous contract expired June 30.

The Directors' unanimous approval of the three-year labor contract came hours after the union membership - the drivers, mechanics and clerical workers serving the East Bay's bus riders - voted for the pact 798 to 497.

VIERRA VICTORY - Surrounded by some of the drivers from around the nation whom he had just bested in the International Bus Roadeo, AC Transit's Rick Vierra accepts his first-place plaque from Warren H. Frank, outgoing board chairman of the sponsoring organization, American Public Transit Association. Frank is chairman and executive director of Central New York Regional Transit Authority. In the early October event, Vierra vied in a field of 59 of the most skilled and knowledgeable bus drivers in North America.

When veteran driver Rick Vierra flew home October 9 after a few days in Detroit, he brought back much more than casual mementos from out-of-town. He came back richer, carrying home a $1,000 savings bond and top competitive honors for besting a field of 59 in the American Public Transit Association's International Bus Roadeo, held annually.

And the days immediately following his return produced even more excitement: a commendation from AC Transit's Board of Directors in the form of a resolution read at the October 15 meeting; press interviews and pictures; and publicity from exterior and interior bus posters.

"APTA judged our driver to be absolutely the best in North America - without exception," noted Board President Linda Shepard. "By making a near-flawless sweep of the competition course, he certainly earned that title."

The international championship in bus driving, in which Vierra earned 640 out of 650 possible points, represents a demanding test of at-the-wheel skill, job knowledge, and appearance.

In addition to written and oral quizzes and uniform-inspection, each contender must master a tough obstacle course that tests ability to turn a bus, in both forward and reverse, to gauge clearances while operating at speed, and to judge distance with accuracy.

Vierra's rivals in Detroit were men and women who had earned first place in local Roadeos across the nation this year. In addition to sweeping AC Transit's mid-July Roadeo - as he had twice previously, in 1977 and 1985 - Vierra also earned a close second place (only five points separated him from the San Francisco MUNI driver placing first) in northern California's (Continued on page 6)

Driving skills pay off for Vierra

(Continued from page 5)

District takes part in Bridge birthday

Beginning this month and continuing into next - when the Oakland-San Francisco Bay Bridge celebrates its official 50th birthday on November 12 - AC Transit is joining with organizations and individuals throughout the area in planning celebratory projects.

This month the District launched its salutes to the bridge's golden anniversary with a contest for transbay passengers. The prize, awarded to three entrants, was attendance (with one guest each) at the commemorative "Bridge Builders Dinner," scheduled November 2 at Treasure Island (the historic span's halfway point).

 Winners of the contest were to be honored as symbolic representatives of the more than 700 million transit patrons who have used AC Transit and its predecessor, Key System, to cross the Bay Bridge since its 1936 opening.

Based on this half-a-century (and continuing) link with the Bay Bridge, the District plans to issue printed commemoratives next month, utilizing vintage pictures and glass negatives from photographic files inherited from transit service predecessors stretching back more than 100 years.

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Guests see, tour newest division

At Hayward Division event (left), Board President Linda Shepard presented as General Manager Gene Gardiner displayed the dedicatory plaque. Among guests were (below, center) Hayward Mayor Alex Giuliani, who (with Oakland Mayor Lionel Wilson among those listening) welcomed the new operating division.

The District’s newest operating facility celebrated official dedication ceremonies October 16. Among the more than 100 guests attending were Alameda County mayors and other city officials, plus representatives of various state legislators.

“Hayward Division represents a major advance for AC Transit,” declared Board President Linda Shepard. “It’s the first of four Divisions which will benefit all of transit’s constituencies: the workers, who will be more comfortable and more efficient in this new workplace; the passengers, who will enjoy cleaner, better-run buses; and the taxpayers, who will reap the benefits of dollar savings through greater productivity.”

Guests at the dedication toured the $21 million facility, which features state-of-the-art technology for dispatching and servicing buses operating in southern Alameda County, parts of Santa Clara and Contra Costa Counties, as well as serving commute-hour passengers to and from San Francisco and Palo Alto.

The new division is the latest element in a federally funded capital program that is rebuilding all of the District’s operating facilities, many of which had become aged, overcrowded, and inefficient.

An open house for employees, retirees, family members, and other friends of the District was held two days following the new division’s official dedication.

Training program is District project

Jim Barlow, maintenance and training coordinator, is excited about a new and innovative training program being developed by AC Transit for implementation in 1987. It is, he says, “the first supervisor training program developed specifically for the public transit industry by private enterprise.”

The project grew out of a three-day conference Barlow attended in Minneapolis in August. Aim of the gathering was to produce a plan for teaching road supervisors and maintenance foreman how to do their jobs better.

The conference, including participants from Houston, Denver and Salt Lake City, yielded a proposal to assist AC Transit in developing such a training program, with the entire cost to be covered by the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, which had supported and encouraged an earlier prototype developed in Houston.

“We are getting involved on the ground floor of this program,” Barlow says. “What we will be doing in the next few weeks is developing the length of the program, the exact curriculum, and other elements necessary to ensure success. We expect to have a course outline by Thanksgiving.”

Between then and now, Barlow will be soliciting critical appraisals from road supervisors, maintenance foremen and other managers on what they feel is vital to the course.

In addition to obvious benefits to the District, Barlow sees an opportunity to help others beyond the boundary of AC Transit’s service area.

“We will be conducting the course at our new Training and Education Center in Hayward,” he says, “and we hope we can work out a satisfactory arrangement for other transit systems to send their personnel for training.”

Even without the benefits of such direct training in the program, the project, Barlow believes, can be geared to be “self-instructing”, enabling personnel from other systems to work directly from course outlines, instructional materials, and lesson plans developed at AC Transit.

“It is in the industry’s interests to assist in providing programs for small properties,” he says.

The program will be produced by Golle & Holmes Custom Education, a private consulting firm.

Two move up the career ladder

In two promotions in Risk and Insurance Department, Marit Roman has assumed new duties as assistant risk manager and James P. Davis has been appointed liability claims supervisor.

Roman, who previously was workers’ compensation supervisor, joined the District in 1982 after serving as a senior workers’ comp supervisor at Mission Insurance in San Francisco. She lives in Marin.

Davis came to AC Transit as a claims representative from Maryland Casualty Co. in 1984. A native of Atlanta and graduate of Georgia State University, Davis lives in Oakland.

Emeryville driver, retiree die

A driver and a long-time retiree have met their deaths.

Emeryville Division Driver Chester A. Walden, 55, died September 14 in Castro Valley. He had been with the District since 1972 and was a Castro Valley resident.

Survivors include his widow, Jane, and four children: Catherine, Chester, Debbie, and Sharon.

Deward B. Mayo, 93, who retired from AC Transit’s predecessor organization in 1958, died September 26 in Sacramento.

He completed 32 years of public transportation service before retiring from Key System as a motor coach operator.

He is survived by his widow, Thelma.
State-of-the-art bus power pack tested

A “clean machine” is the goal of a new electronic engine control package Frank Johnson, general superintendent, Central Maintenance, is trying in AC Transit bus number 2056. Working with the private local firm of Sierra Diesel, the dealer for Detroit Diesel Allison, AC Transit has introduced the latest state-of-the-art power package to a coach, hoping to improve fuel consumption and air quality emissions.

The bus was in service the second week of October and two things were apparent, Johnson says: first, “exhaust smoke

Director receives honors
From two organizations

Director Roy Nakadegawa, on the District’s Board since 1972, received special honors from the Metropolitan Transportation commission (MTC) late last month.

In a “Special Letter of Recognition,” MTC noted that Nakadegawa was instrumental in developing a highly successful paratransit program for elderly and handicapped residents of Richmond, among his many contributions to area transportation.

A City of Richmond civil engineer by profession, Nakadegawa also received honors last month in the annual convention of the 25,000-member American Public Works Association (APWA), held in New Orleans. He was elected to the exclusive 13-seat executive council of the APWA’s Institute for Transportation.

Vierra wins top spot

(Continued from page 3)

regional Roadeo in Santa Cruz in August.

An AC Transit driver since 1969, Vierra resides in Livermore, with wife Jayne and twin sons, Thomas and Timothy. He drives out of the new Hayward Division, serving passengers in the Livermore and San Ramon areas. He usually drives Line D-Walnut Creek-Dublin and Line U-Hayward-Livermore, part of the express bus network operated by AC Transit under contract with BART.

Oregon football rooter

Guts quick camera return

Some you lose ... some you get back, as Oregon State Quarterback Erick Wilhelm might tell you about his Dad’s camera, lost on an AC Transit bus October 11, the day Cal hosted the Beavers.

It took an alert driver, two supervisors, and a central dispatcher to restore the missing camera, left behind by the elder Wilhelm when he transferred in downtown Berkeley to a shuttle bus bound for Memorial Stadium.

AC Transit Driver David Lyons noticed the lost item on his Line 15 bus shortly before noon and contacted Central Dispatch, where Carolyn Russell immediately requested Supervisor Maurice McCarthy to pick up the camera and deliver it to Supervisor Richard McVoy, at the corner of Piedmont and Bancroft. McVoy then turned it over to the elder Wilhelm just prior to the 1 p.m. start of the game.

Though the camera owner was no loser that day, the Cal football team was. Oregon State prevailed, 14-12.

Our ‘Stockholders’ Write

I have commuted on the D, UL, UP, and former US lines, operated by AC Transit under contract to BART, since the day they first went into service in December, 1974. That’s given me plenty of time and opportunity to observe the conduct and driving habits of hundreds of your drivers.

I’m sure you get your share of complaints when things go wrong. But I would like to acknowledge and commend one of your truly outstanding drivers: Bill Gamlen, who is so skillful and adept in maneuvering that huge bus, he amazes me. And he does so with confidence and safety.

Erick N. Larson
San Ramon

This lady driver (Sara Durkee) was outstanding.

A blind man was on the bus; he had asked to be let off at another bus stop. When he got off, he went the wrong way. She did not move her bus until he turned around, with help from a person she asked to assist.

I wish we who ride the buses had more like her.

Arlee Cooper
Oakland

As a visitor to the Bay Area, I needed some information regarding bus service and called your Information Center. I would like to say how friendly, efficient, and helpful Rae Burnett was to me on several occasions.

Ms. Burnett is to be commended.

Lina Goffe
Alameda

This is a letter of commendation for R.E. Matthews for finding my wallet, which had been stolen, and making sure it was returned to me.

My wallet was stolen early in the morning as I was getting gas at an all-night station. The AC Transit office in Emeryville told me that as Matthews was driving his bus a few hours later, he saw the wallet lying on the street, stopped, and picked it up. The next day he also found three more of my credit cards at the same place. He turned the wallet and credit cards in.

I was spared the hassle of waiting in line at a DMV office for a new driver’s license; buying a new wallet; getting another photo employee card and press card (I’m a newspaper editor); and paying for another swim card (worth $25) and another video rental card (worth $30). Although I had already cancelled my credit cards by the time I got the wallet back, his returning the cards prevented anyone else from using them, which would have meant more time and trouble for me.

Wanda J. MacClarin
Oakland

Just have to let you know of the driver of an early morning bus I boarded to go to Kaiser Hospital, Hayward. He (Daniel Benefield) was happy, courteous, and friendly. Everyone I noticed on the bus was smiling and chatting. He was an excellent driver also.

Helen Ann Kisner
Hayward
Actions of the Board

At a regular meeting September 10, the Board of Directors:

• Approved Request for Proposals for slide presentation in connection with Comprehensive Service Plan, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

• Approved a series of service adjustments to be implemented in December, 1986, on motion of Director Nakadegawa.

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At an adjourned regular meeting September 24, the Board of Directors:

• Authorized travel of one District representative to attend bus air conditioning maintenance program in Minneapolis October 13-17, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Adopted resolution relating to withdrawals of deposited funds, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Approved opposition to State Propositions 61 and 62, on motion of Director Rinehart.

• Approved negotiations with Crain and Associates for a marketing research survey, on motion of Director Wiggins.

• Approved three staff positions, on motion of Director Rinehart.

Director John L. McDonnell plans to retire

Director John L. “Jack” McDonnell, an enthusiastic mass transportation supporter at the local, regional, and national level, will retire in November after 30 years on AC Transit’s Board of Directors.

McDonnell’s transit advocacy activities began early in the 1950s, long before AC Transit took over from the failing, privately-owned Key System in 1960. He was an active member of the citizens’ movement which promoted the legislation that created AC Transit in 1956. That same year, he was elected to the Board.

Voters of the Alameda-Oakland-Piedmont area repeatedly returned McDonnell to office; and his fellow Directors elected him to four two-year terms as president of the Board. In 1979, he was elected chairman of American Public Transit Association. And in 1981, he received the regional Metropolitan Transportation Commission’s Special Recognition Award.

Activities marking his retirement include a November 7 civic banquet in Oakland.