

# Votran's

# People Movers

January 2007

We drive a great bargain

## Votran fares to increase January 14 to offset rising operating expenses

To help offset substantially higher operating costs, Votran fares will increase January 14. It's the county transit system's first fare hike since 1998.

"We realize many of our passengers are of modest means and we're sensitive to that," said Lois Bollenback, Votran general manager. "But our costs are rising substantially. Fuel expenditures alone have increased 112 percent in five years (from \$826,793 in FY 2000 to \$1.7 million in FY 2005). We'd like to have fares account for 20 percent of our operating costs. But due to higher expenses, fares now account for 16 percent."

Bollenback added Votran makes every effort to operate a safe and efficient system. "We identify state and federal fund-

ing sources that help to support the cost of providing transit service. We monitor the performance of our routes carefully to ensure we're balancing the social and economic needs of the community with reasonable levels of productivity. Over the years, Votran has implemented new technology to increase the efficiency of our operations. Votran works closely with County staff to identify cost saving opportunities. This includes coordinating fuel purchases, leasing tires, and participating in shared use facilities."

An upgraded fare collection system on Votran buses allows for more payment options, improved revenue accounting and security, reduced opportunities for fare abuse (counterfeiting and illegal transfers), improved ridership data collection, reduced administrative and operational costs; faster boarding on buses; and improved convenience for riders. The new equipment includes electronic fare boxes on the buses that accept and distribute magnetic swipe cards.

This technology makes fare payment more convenient for customers and revenue collection less costly for Votran. It will affect the distribution and sale of boarding passes in addition to the types of passes available. When the fare increase is implemented Votran will begin using multi-ride passes (all-day pass, three-day pass, seven-day pass, and 31-day pass). Cash payment will be accepted.

"The goal of the new fare collection system is to increase collections, encourage more frequent ridership, attract new riders, streamline fare collection, and make boarding more efficient and user-friendly," said Bollenback. "While the fares are increasing and transfers will be eliminated, I hope our riders will find the new swipe cards and accompanying technology to be a value. In many cases the fare passes, especially the 31-day pass, are very economical."



## A message from the General Manager

This is the time of year we give thanks. We at Votran have much for which to be thankful. We are fortunate to have the support of the Volusia County Council whose members recognize that Votran primarily serves people who have no other transportation. Without Votran service, many in our community wouldn't be able to visit their families and friends.

I am grateful for the support of our wonderful, dedicated employees. Day in and day out, rain or shine, our drivers, mechanics and support staff give their best to serve our riders. Most often our employees are working while many others are enjoying time off. I wish them and their families a happy new year.

I believe Votran has established an excellent reputation, much of this due to the leadership and vision of our former general manager, Ken Fischer, whose career accomplishments have been recognized with his selection into the Florida Public Transportation Association's Hall of Fame. This is a much-deserved honor. I know I am joined by the entire Mobility Management Team in thanking Ken for all he has done for Votran.

As we move into 2007, our pledge is to do an even better job for the customers who depend on our service. Happy New Year!

Lois Bollenback  
General Manager



NEW FARE BOXES USE SWIPE CARDS  
There are new payment options

## Votran showcases \$4.1-million technology package

Votran is implementing a series of technology improvements known as the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) plan that will help to provide a more efficient, convenient and customer-friendly transit service within Volusia County. The technology package has a \$4.1-million price tag and is about 50 percent complete.

In an effort to showcase these technology improvements, Votran recently hosted a technology open house to demonstrate the ITS to Votran and county staff and state officials.

"The new technologies will increase

efficiency, reduce operational costs and provide improved service to the customers of Votran," said Lois Bollenback, Votran general manager.

The Volusia County Council approved Votran's multi-year ITS plan in 2003. These technologies include systems that track vehicle location, coordinate transfers between routes, facilitate faster, more efficient paratransit reservations and service delivery, collect real-time service and operational information, and provide a great deal of information to help customers and management.

The first buses with the electronic fare boxes were put into service early this year on nine of the fixed route buses serving West Volusia. The remainder of the fleet was outfitted with the fare boxes in August. The fare boxes accept a variety of fare media such as daily and weekly passes.

Votran also is continuing the installation of mobile data terminals, automatic passenger counters, automatic vehicle locators, automatic stop announcers and single point log on for the operator which will enable Votran to serve passengers with real time information on bus location.

## Votran mechanic recognized by FPTA



JOHN FONDERARO

The Florida Public Transit Association (FPTA) recognized John Foderaro, 26-year Votran "A" mechanic, at the organization's annual conference. Foderaro was named the second place Bus Mechanic of the Year.

"We are proud of John and this accomplishment," said Kent Stover, assistant general manager of operations and maintenance. "Votran's maintenance staff is exemplary."

FPTA is one of the most active state transit associations in the nation. FPTA membership is composed of 25 fixed route systems, a commuter railroad, a heavy rail commuter system, and two people mover systems.



VOTRAN SHOWCASES NEW TECHNOLOGY PACKAGE  
Standing, Lois Bollenback, Votran General Manager, and County Chair Frank Bruno  
Seated is County Council member Jack Hayman

**Commutus Liberatus**

**Treatment for commuter disorder approved**

Researchers have found that people who make the daily commute from Volusia County to Orlando suffer from aggravation as a result of spending too much time on I-4. But they have discovered a service that eliminates the stress and reduces the expense of commuting to Orlando. Commutus Liberatus is approved for daily use by commuters of all ages. Visit our website at [votran.org](http://votran.org)

- Park & Ride
- RideShare
- I-4 Express Bus with Guaranteed Ride Home
- Van Pool

**Votran Commuter Assistance Program**

866/610-RIDE (7433)

Votran is a service of Volusia County Government

## Rider spotlight



**Name:** Edward Fabbri, Deltona

**Profile:** Has been riding Votran for about 9 years. Uses Votran for doctor appointments, shopping, and for employment.

**Quote:** "I'm very happy to have service with an affordable cost. I feel the drivers are friendly and helpful. I do wish there were more frequent trips to Orlando."

# Ken Fischer inducted into the FPTA Hall of Fame

Ken Fischer has been a public transportation leader. His career accomplishments have landed him a spot in the Florida Public Transportation Association's Hall of Fame.

The former Votran general manager was inducted along with former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives Tom Gustafson at the association's recent annual meeting. Currently, Fischer is on the board of directors of McDonald Transit Associates, Inc. as Vice President and Managing Director.

"Highly competent, trustworthy and dependable, are just a few of the words used to describe Ken Fischer," said Frank Bruno, Volusia County Chair. "These characteristics are what have made him a leader in the transportation industry. He is respected in the eyes of elected officials,



**KEN FISCHER**

business associates, employees and customers."

Fischer came to Florida in 1981 by way of National City, California. After three years as general manager of National City Transit, he was relocated to the Sunshine State. Armed

with a degree in Urban Planning from Columbus State University, he moved to Volusia County and began a 25-year stint as Votran's general manager.

By 1994, Fischer had transitioned the responsibilities of the coordinated paratransit services from the Volusia County Council on Aging to Votran. The transition required

overcoming a myriad of issues, such as a \$200,000 debt, a fleet of paratransit vehicles that needed to be replaced, scheduling software that had not been implemented and contracts that required negotiation.

"He navigated Votran through these issues," said Lois Bollenback, Votran's general manager. "Today, the paratransit system handles more than 1,200 trips per day and is considered a model for transit agencies across the state."

In addition to his dedication to Votran, Fischer served for 10 years as the FPTA's representative for the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. He is a past president of FPTA and two local chambers of commerce.

"Ken's dedication is obvious and clearly demonstrated in the success of Votran," said Bollenback.

# Votran honors employees during Transit Days

Votran's mobility management team was honored recently for providing safe, courteous, dependable and cost-effective public transportation services.

As part of the annual Votran employee recognition, members of the Volusia County Council joined the Votran staff. The event opened the eyes of non-bus drivers to the challenges drivers face on the roads.



*MICHELLE TO WRITE!!!!!!!!!!!!*



**HISTORIC TRAIN STATION RENOVATION COMPLETE**  
*The dedication ceremony drew host of dignitaries*

# County Council marks renovation of train station

The renovation and restoration of the historic DeLand Train Station is complete. The Volusia County Council conducted a ribbon-cutting December 21 to commemorate the project.

The \$424,471 restoration, done in cooperation among Volusia County, station owner Amtrak and track owner CSX, followed federal guidelines for historic preservation. The project, which began in 1999, was funded by grant monies from the Florida Department of Transportation. Votran took over project management in 2001.

# Votran Gold service gets high marks from users

Ninety-one percent of Votran Gold users rate the overall quality of the service as good or excellent, according to the findings of a recent survey completed by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR).

The survey was conducted as part of the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) update. More than 96 percent of those surveyed rated the drivers' courtesy as excellent or good.

"We are happy the quality of Votran's Gold service is recognized by its users," said Lois Bollenback, Votran general manager. "The Votran team strives for quality and we always are looking for ways to serve our customers better and more efficiently."

The Gold Service survey also indicates the average rider is a white female age 75 or older with a household income of less than \$10,000. The typical rider does not have a driver's license and uses Votran Gold services a few times a month to visit the doctor/dentist.



*VOTRAN GOALS IS DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE  
It's for people who can't ride fixed route buses*

## **VOTRAN's Mission**

VOTRAN's mission is to identify and safely meet the mobility needs of Volusia County. This mission will be accomplished through a courteous, dependable and an environmentally-sound team commitment to quality service.

[www.VOTRAN.org](http://www.VOTRAN.org)

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STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT # 549  
DAYTONA BCH FL

VOTRAN  
950 Big Tree Rd., S. Daytona, Florida  
(386) 756-7496

