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Stimulus funds will be used to rebuild one of the locomotives such as the one pictured here. (Photo courtesy of Gary Layda)

## RTA announces plans for stimulus funds

Two transit projects have been identified by the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) for funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

These projects include building a permanent station at

Martha and rebuilding one of the Music City Star locomotives. Approximately \$1.2 million will go toward rebuilding one of the Music City Star locomotives and \$2 million toward building the permanent train station at Martha.

## Legislation would establish dedicated transit funding

More funding could be coming to state transit systems if proposed legislation in the 106<sup>th</sup> Tennessee General Assembly passes.

The legislation is in response to the growing need to provide more resources for public transportation throughout Tennessee.

“Legislation is moving through the General Assembly, with support from all over the state, which will enable local municipalities to create a dedicated revenue source for mass transit,” Regional Transportation Authority CEO Paul J. Ballard said. “This proposed legislation would not raise taxes but instead allow voters or local governing bodies to decide how to best fund public transportation and to create a stable and reliable source of funding for transit.”

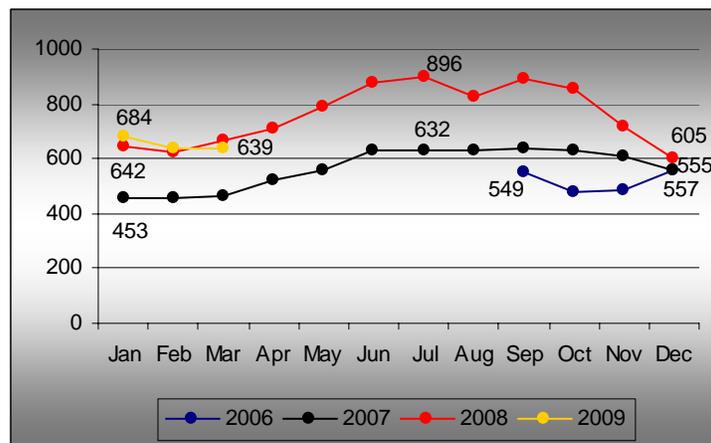
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## MTA begins management of RTA

The Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) began managing the Music City Star commuter rail line and all suburban bus and van pool services of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) on Dec. 1, 2008.

Under a contract between the two agencies, MTA Chief Executive Officer Paul J. Ballard is now serving as CEO of both agencies, and the Davidson Transit Organization (DTO) management team and staff are providing all support for the RTA Board of Directors, who represent the state of Tennessee and 38 city and county governments in Middle Tennessee.

MTA is not assuming any financial obligations of the RTA, and is providing management services on a cost-only basis for the first year of the three-year contract.



Music City Star Average Daily Ridership

# Local train riders form Regional Commuters Association



Passengers board the Music City Star at Riverfront Station. (Photo courtesy of Gary Layda)

Several Music City Star riders have formed a local train riders advocacy association to help raise public awareness and support for Tennessee's only commuter rail service.

The group, Regional Commuters Association, meets monthly at various locations. Officers were recently elected and are listed below:

- Sheila Varga — President
- Susan Wilkins — Secretary/Treasurer
- Ted Cooper — Controller

The next meeting is scheduled on May 30 and the location is to be determined.

If you are interested in working with this group, please email one of the officers at [star.riders@tennessee.usa.com](mailto:star.riders@tennessee.usa.com).

## RTA, MTA celebrate Earth Day

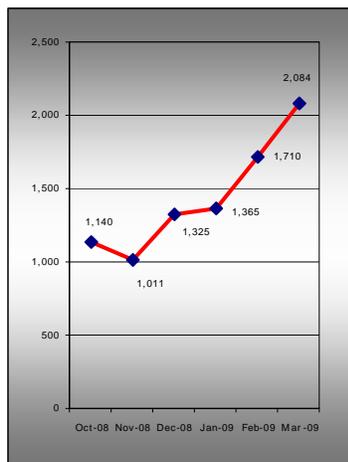
On April 18, transit personnel and supporters representing the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) and Nashville Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) joined Nashvillians celebrating the environment at Nashville Earth Day Festival activities in Centennial Park.

Both an RTA booth and an MTA booth were set up and promoted the many benefits of public transit and its effect on air quality.

The free, city-wide event featured different sections of the park representing different areas of the environment, such as water, recycling and sustainable living/large conservation. The Nashville festival included family-friendly games, activities, food and live musical performances.

## Dedicated transit funding

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The ridership increase on RTA's new Route 92X Gallatin/Hendersonville Express is one example of the need for more resources for transit in Tennessee's communities.

Some organizations supporting the legislation include: Nashville MTA; Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization mayors on the executive board; Franklin Transit Authority Board of Directors; RTA; Tennessee Public Transportation Association; Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce; Greater Nashville Regional Council; and the Council on Aging.

The proposed legislation will give local RTAs the ability to dedicate a source of local/regional revenue to transit.

## RTA's *NEXT STOP...*



On May 2, transit staff and supporters will have a booth at Bark in the Park to answer questions about the Music City Star commuter train as well as car pools and van pools. The event will be held from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Wilson Bank & Trust on West Main Street in Lebanon.

## New Star campaign in works

A new ridership campaign for the Music City Star is being planned.

Key messages of the campaign include riding the Music City Star saves money, helps the environment, and eliminates the stress of driving during rush hour.

Other strategies include scheduling more outreach efforts to get more people familiar with the Music City Star — if you try it, you will like it. This strategy will be used to attract first-time riders and turn them into regular commuters.



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