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**CONTACT:**

Tri Delta Transit: Leeann Lorono [llorono@eccta.org](mailto:llorono@eccta.org)  
925-754-6622  
County Connection: Ryan Jones [rjones@cccta.org](mailto:rjones@cccta.org)  
925-680-2037  
WestCAT: Mica McFadden [mica@westcat.org](mailto:mica@westcat.org)  
510-724-3331

## **Transit Driver Appreciation Day Celebrated with FREE Fares!**

Antioch, CA, March 9, 2023 – Transit Driver Appreciation Day is Saturday, March 18 and Tri Delta Transit, County Connection, and WestCAT are celebrating in a special way– by going FARE FREE for the day. No payment will be required on all three agencies buses for fixed route and paratransit. Additionally, Tri Delta Transit’s ride-hailing service, Tri MyRide, will not require any payment for the day either.

Transit Driver Appreciation Day started in 2009 in Seattle as a blog about appreciating bus drivers. By 2014 the name was changed to cover the diverse transportation available throughout the United States. The day is set aside to thank and appreciate transit drivers for the great contributions they make to the community.

“The contribution drivers make has never been realized more than over the past three years of the pandemic. Transit operators performed a critical and essential service during this time by continuing to provide public transportation,” said Tri Delta Transit CEO, Rashidi Barnes. “Through these unprecedented times, our drivers showed continued courage, patience and perseverance.”

Transit Driver Appreciation Day, also known as Transit Operator Appreciation Day, continues to be a notable day for those who value public transportation. Through COVID-19 and risking possible exposure to the virus, transit operators continue to show up, adapting to ever changing regulations and working with unpredictable changes in ridership numbers as well as adapting to new schedules. Plus, national driver shortages add new responsibilities to cover shifts, perform extra cleaning and sanitizing of vehicle, all to ensure our transit system can keep running.

“There’s been a lot of unknowns in the past few years in public transit operations,” acknowledged Bill Churchill, General Manager of County Connection. “There can be a lot of multifaceted work a transit driver has to perform, including, thoroughly checking their vehicle before every route starts to ensure the safety of the riders, navigating traffic and accidents, learning new technology, and remembering customer service duties,” Churchill added, “We’re so proud that, despite any setbacks, we’ve maintained a high on-time performance rate—a testament to the dedication and hard work of our drivers.”

Rob Thompson, General Manager of WestCAT shared a similar sentiment of transit drivers, stating, “Our drivers truly are the front line for our agencies, their commitment and hard work are invaluable in providing public transit to our communities.”

Drivers are dedicated and hardworking because they drive as a service to the community. “We hope by going fare free, riders can focus on the driver and their rider experience, and visa-versa, instead of focusing on fares,” says Tri Delta Transit Board Chair Anissa Williams. “For Transit Driver Appreciation Day, agencies hope everyone takes a moment to thank their transit driver when riding the bus and posts positive messages on the social media pages of the system you ride so that the drivers can see them.” The transit agencies were also happy to offer free fares, as a day of fare free riding is also nice for passengers and helps to bring attention to this annual day of recognition.

To learn more about these transit agencies, visit [TriDeltaTransit.com](http://TriDeltaTransit.com), [CountyConnection.com](http://CountyConnection.com) and [Westcat.org](http://Westcat.org).

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